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BALLET TODAY

MAY, 1960 **TWO SHILLINGS**

WAITING HER CUE
Merle Park of the Royal Ballet in "Cinderella"

Ballet TODAY

A MONTHLY REVIEW
DEVOTED TO DANCE

Established 1946

THE MAGAZINE WITH THE WIDEST NEWS COVERAGE OF BALLET THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

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Irène Skorik
Photo: Angelo Studio, Cairo.

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Editor's Log

Members of Festival Ballet at the Australian stand at the Ideal Home Exhibition.

THE British Council gave a farewell cocktail party to the Festival Ballet Company before their departure on their tour of Latin America, and it must have been the first time for weeks that the administration and the dancers had caught their breath. Director Dr. Julian Braunsweg, in between the Company's season at Festival Hall and the colossal task of arranging such a tour, had managed to slip into hospital for an operation, and is now looking fit and well again. John Gilpin, who had started slipped disc trouble after his bad fall at the Gala Charity Performance at Drury Lane last November, had practically recovered, and Anton Dolin, who sustained a bad foot injury whilst at his villa in the south of France last summer, had also made a miraculous return to his old form.

The dancers, with their tour of the English provinces still keeping them busy, somehow had to fix in inoculations and all the necessary formalities in connection with such a tour, and the girls had a problem to solve which has beset the female of the species throughout the ages: "What shall I wear?"

Anita Landa wailed to me "We are only allowed to take one suitcase by air." She is the only member of the Company who speaks Spanish (her mother is a Spaniard) and was in great demand amongst the Spanish people present at the party. As most of them had invited her to their homes in Spain, I saw her point. Buying clothes out there will not solve the problem either, because they will not be able to return with any extra luggage.

The Company has great plans for the summer season at Festival Hall (18th July—17th September). Two new productions will be staged—*Bonaparte* with choreography by Serge Lifar and music specially composed by Tomasi. This ballet will be premièred in Nice during the festivities in June to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the town of Nice becoming part of France. The Company will fly to France after leaving Buenos Aires at the end of May. The second new production for Festival Hall season will be Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque*, the first Balanchine ballet to be mounted by the Company, which is to be given during the latter part of the season.

The world of commerce is realising more and more that the world-wide popularity of ballet has great publicity value, and it is now an everyday occurrence to ask ballerinas to perform opening ceremonies for commercial undertakings. Our picture shows one such occasion—five Australian members of Festival Ballet were asked to visit the Commonwealth of Australia's stand at the Ideal Home Exhibition. Dressed in their *Nutcracker* ballet costumes, the girls were received by Mr. K. R. H. Ballantyne, Australian Trade Publicity Director (UK), who introduced them to Pamela Dayus, the Australia House cookery adviser. Miss Dayus had devised for them a special "sugar plum fairy" cake decorated with two miniature ballerinas. (left to right) in our picture Wendy Barry, Jill Bathurst, Pixie Bevan, Joan Potter and Marilyn Burr (Marilyn and Wendy are sisters). Presenting the cake (far left) is Marie Walker from Ayr, North Queensland, one of the Australian assistants working in the Australian demonstration kitchen.

Granada's TV director Mark Stuart (second from left) calls a conference to discuss details of the presentation of Cinderella (*see* Wonderful Idea).

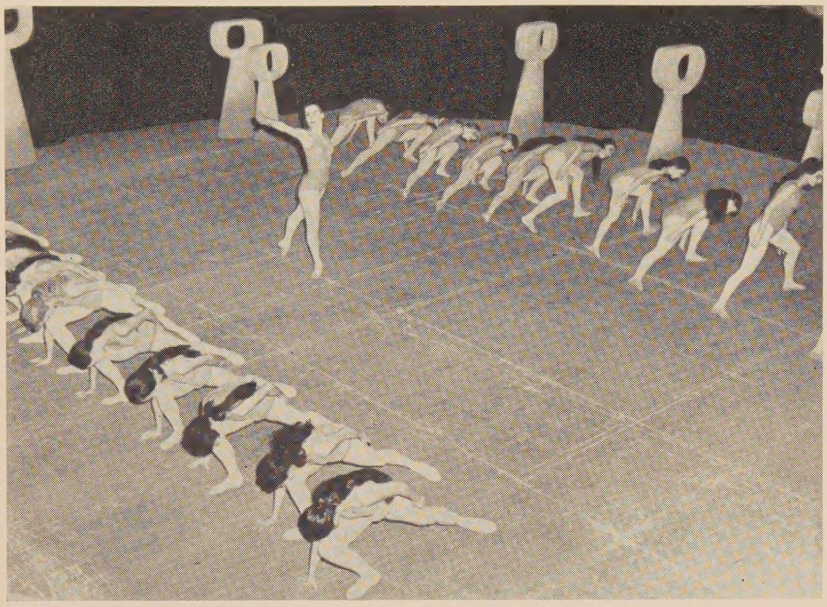
WONDERFUL IDEA

If you ask any film or television company for information you are not left in any doubt about their co-operation to the limit, and at once (a very important thing to busy editors). I wish I could say the same about ballet companies, but alas, even despite their greatly improved press bulletins, the really important news usually comes to us first by "bush telegraph."

During the production of *Cinderella* for ITV, for instance (to be transmitted on April 13th, starring Fonteyn, Somes and the Royal Ballet), part of Granada's publicity programme was a day's visit to their TV Centre. Flying to and from the Manchester studio by Viscount to see the sets designed specially for the production, to meet the cast and see them in action before the cameras, and lunch at the Centre, was part of a scheme to show ballet writers something of the final stage of dress rehearsals, etc. As it happened, the date came too near my press week, and with my nose to the grindstone I had to reluctantly decline. But it was a wonderful idea and the promoters are to be complimented on it.

OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED ON 18th MAY

News from here and there



A scene from the ballet Le Sacre du Printemps

A scene from Maurice Béjart's ballet Orphée *which was to have been given its English première on July* 13*th, but owing to the printing dispute in Great Britain the season was cancelled*

BALLET MEXICANO

The Modern Ballet Theatre of México were extended an official invitation by the Instituto Nacional de la Industria Turística Cubana to appear in their Musical Festival in Havana, Cuba, from 22nd to 24th March.

The Company of 28 gave both Modern and Folkloric programmes, a total of 15 ballets. The conductor was Armando Zayas.

This programme marked the beginning of the 1960-61 season and plans are being developed for further international tours.

SIGURD LEEDER

Sigurd Leeder has now left England for Santiago, Chile, to take up his new position as Director of Studies and Teacher in the Escuela de Danza de Universidad de Chile.

The Sigurd Leeder School of Dance, London, will continue at Morley College, 61, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E.1, under the joint direction of Madame Simone Michelle Soukop and Miss June Kemp.

AT SADLER'S WELLS

During the week beginning April 18th the Ballet Company of the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, together with the groups which have been associated with it during the current season in Brussels—Maurice Béjart's Ballet Company, the Western Theatre Ballet and members of Janine Charrat's Company, will appear at Sadler's Wells Theatre. The Company will bring their orchestra and Andre Vandernoot will conduct. Ballets in the programme include *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *Orphée*, and *La Symphony Pour Un Homme Seul* with choreography by Béjart; *Fantaisie Concertante*, *Les Algues* and *Concerto de Greig* (Pas de deux) with choreography by Charrat; and *The Prisoners*, presented for the first time with orchestra, choreography by Peter Darrell.

BALLET RAMBERT

The grant paid by the Arts Council to Ballet Rambert was increased from £7,500 to £15,000 as from year beginning April 1960. The additional money is to be used to help refurbish the wardrobe and scenery of the Company and also for the presentation of new ballets and the commissioning of new music.

The Company's annual summer season will be given at Sadler's Wells for two weeks commencing 18th July, and is to be followed by a visit to the Devon Festival for one week commencing August 3rd.

WORLD DANCE COURSE

For the third year a summer dance course is to be organised by The Cultural Association for Choreographic Research to be held at La Salle Pleyel, 252, Faubourg Saint-Honoré Paris from the 4th to the 14th July. Serge Lifar is the President, administrative directors are Ginette Bastien and Jean Dorcy. Many famous dance teachers and writers on the dance will take part but the course is open to all and specially graded to cater for beginners, intermediate or advanced students. The fee is 220 new francs, and details of where to write appear on another page in this issue.

JACOB'S PILLOW, U.S.A.

Founder Ted Shawn has announced the faculty for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival for its 19th season starting June 27th. Alfredo Corvino takes a three weeks' ballet course; Margaret Craske for six weeks; Modern Dance-Myra Kinch; Hindu Dance-Indrani; Carolo Goya and Matteo. Principles of Movement and Rhythm, Pantomime and Dramatic Dance, Pedagogy of the Dance Ted Shawn, Dance Composition and Composition for Dance-Myra Kinch and Manuel Galea. Audio-Visual Aids to Dance Education Carol Lynn; Stagecraft Workshop for Dancers John Christian; Dance Notation (Labanotation) will also be included in the curriculum. Choreographer in Residence will be Hel Roos, of Amsterdam, and on the last week's festival programme a new choreographic work by Miss Roos will be presented using students who have attended the Jacob's Pillow throughout the entire nine weeks. The courses run for nine weeks and six weeks commencing June 27th and three weeks beginning August 8th.

LONDON REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

BALLABILE

THERE are times when the production policy at the Garden is utterly bewildering. Who is there in the Royal Ballet who considers *Ballabile* worth reviving—particularly at a time like the present, when highly talented young choreographers are coming to the fore? In fact when *Ballabile* was first produced by Roland Petit in 1950 it failed dismally because it showed very little of his real talent, being a clumsy and very unfunny attempt to use a small number of dancers in a slightly mad way to suggest a rapid succession of unlikely events. There were a few faintly amusing entries by Anne Negus (in a zany role later taken over by Margaret Dale), but choreographically the ballet was a nullity. The new version destroys what little point the original ballet had by bringing in a much larger number of dancers, and we are left with only Clavé's scenery and costumes and Chabrier's music to lighten our boredom. But even the music is to me off-putting because it recalls distracting memories of the amusing ballet which Ninette de Valois arranged for the Ballet Rambert in 1934 (*Bar aux Folies Bergères*), also to the music of Chabrier; and Clavé's designs are little more than weak variations on his other designs for Petit.

Just as in the original production, Petit seems to have put together the steps in a deliberately awkward manner, running across the phrasing of the music: as a result even Merle Park—with all her intelligence, musicality and creative ability—was able to make very little of them. Like Margot Fonteyn, she has a marked gift for making what seem to be silk purses out of ersatz material, but even she is defeated by a sow's ear.

I have the suspicion that we owe this revival to a naïve idea that the repertoire needs something witty and French to lighten it, and that *Ballabile*, being the work of a French choreographer, is witty and French. In fact it is nothing of the kind: this sort of inanity is international. Under the circumstances it would have been a far better idea to revive either *Bar aux Folies Bergères* or the very interesting ballet which Petit arranged for Margot Fonteyn in 1948, *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit:* though much of the ballet was dull, it had a marvellous central rôle of Agathe (the White Kitten), which was created for Margot Fonteyn (most cat-like of dancers), and I feel sure she would put even more into the role today. What is more it would provide a fine role for the rising young artists of the company.

LYNN SEYMOUR'S "GISELLE"

One of the young artists who is being given exceptionally favourable opportunities at a very early stage in her career is Lynn Seymour, and her first performance of the title role of *Giselle* (which followed the revival of *Ballabile* at the matinée of 5th March) was therefore an event of real interest.

From her first appearance in Act I she struck a new note, giving a striking impression of extreme youth and of a rather appealing gawkiness, like that of a foal. This impression arose partly from her physical appearance (with her long legs and round features) but even more from the way she moved and her whole approach to the part. With her strong technique she performed the steps very well (though her turns were rather slow); but her technical maturity was in the strongest possibly contrast to the childishness of her interpretation, which made her seem at times more likely to be playing with dolls than having a love-affair with Albrecht.

This artistic schizophrenia was tolerable during most of Act I, and in fact gave an odd sort of pathos to her dancing which made a strong impression on the audience; the effect was comparable in some ways to that made by Ulanova in early scenes of *Romeo and Juliet*. But things went very wrong in the mad scene, where Lynn Seymour showed almost no acting ability: this scene is so well choreographed that no-one can fail completely in it, but Lynn Seymour very nearly did just that. There was no real suggestion of conflict or madness, and the colt-like gawkiness was quite inadequate to fill out the violent stress of emotion.

Here she was hampered more than ever by her features and her poor make-up; with her small face and very round cheeks she must learn to make up intelligently so as to put shape into her face: this is largely a matter of shading.

One might have expected her artistic immaturity to make her even more inadequate in Act II—where childish gawkiness is quite out of place. But she looked far better, partly because of the blue lighting and partly because of the way her cheeks were given a more attractive shape by the traditional coiffure à la Grisi. Then, in the middle of her first *adage* with Albrecht, she suddenly developed a new maturity and nobility in her slow arm movements, making them glide in S-curves with a splendid continuity and extension. This was original, expressive and musical, and suggested that Lynn Seymour has much more considerable potentialities for artistic development than one might have guessed from her Swan-Queen or her Act I Giselle—particularly in view of the fact that she retained much of this new-found nobility for the rest of Act II of *Giselle*. She still has a number of tough problems to tackle: acting, make-up, turns and in fact any sort of fast movement. But she is being given golden opportunities, and clearly she has the determination and capacity for sustained work which will help her to make the most of them.

She was fortunate in being partnered by David Blair, who gave her all the support she needed, and was manly, intelligent and dignified in the role of Albrecht.

RAM GOPAL AND MARKOVA

THE most interesting novelty of this season (which began at the Princes on 7th March) was *Radha-Krishna*, a short pas de deux (inspired by the miniature ballet of the same name created by Uday Shankar nearly forty years ago for Pavlova and himself) which this time was arranged by Ram Gopal for guest-artist Markova and for himself. We were told that this production represented the fulfilment of a promise made by Markova ten years ago; and as soon as she lifted her veil (a few moments after the curtain rose on *Radha-Krishna*) it was easy to see why she was attracted to Eastern dancing. In fact she looked almost incredibly Eastern in her sari—just as Pavlova did some decades ago. Markova looked more like a Yemenite princess than a Hindu cowherd, but that was of small importance.

From a choreographic point of view what she did was of minor interest; a few simple mudras (which she performed with a balletic follow-through, instead of establishing each one in space in the Indian manner), and a few simple walking and turning steps (which she performed very lightly, making no attempt to strike rhythms on the floor with her feet in the Indian way). Possibly she felt that any proper Indian foot-movements would detract in some way from the ethereal image of herself which she has taken so much trouble to build up in recent years. Ram Gopal for his part performed a few simple steps and gestures inspired by Kathak, together with the light skipping steps on the half-point which have little basis in Indian dancing but which for some reason he seems to like very much.

The other novelty in this programme was the story of how a god created man and woman and what followed, performed by Ram Gopal in Bharata Natyam *abhinaya* (mudras and facial expressions) to match a spoken commentary. He told the story with wit and economy, but unfortunately it was impossible to enjoy his performance because of the appalling archness and affectation of the speaker (who stood at the side of the stage wearing an exotic evening dress).

Ram Gopal and Alicia Markova in the Indian love poem Radha Krishna

The other items ran over a wide gamut of quality. At the top end there was the Sinhalese dancer Sesha Palihakkara, performing a Kandyan dance with the right virility and panache and a very clean line, and also part of a pure-dance solo in Bharata Natyam style; at the other end there were various girls showing every known fault in Bharata Natyam: breaking of tala (rhythmic measure), slackness of line, vulgarity of facial expression and so on.

BALLET VENTURE 1960

IN a number of ways the opening night of Ballet Venture 1960 at the Pembroke Theatre in Croydon on 14th March was a landmark in the history of English ballet. A good many chamber ballet companies have been formed in this country in the thirty years since the renaissance in English ballet began, but Ballet Venture 1960 had the unusual advantage of representing the culmination of a relatively short period of intensive creative activity, during which a choreographer showed real talent and had the chance of developing it under conditions of reasonable artistic freedom. Producing ballets for the Sunday Ballet Club, Norman Dixon had to struggle against very difficult rehearsal conditions and heterogeneous casts—but he was very lucky in being able to put his ideas into the shape *he* wanted, and apply the lessons he had learned during his years as leading soloist with the Ballet Rambert.

When he formed a company to perform at the Pembroke Theatre (which is a theatre-in-the-round) he had the great advantage of working with his own dancers, but at the same time he had to face a great challenge: that of adapting his ballets so that they could be seen from all sides simultaneously. This is something new in this country (though it has been done in America) and Norman Dixon's remarkable success in meeting this challenge gives a fair measure of his resourcefulness and high professional competence. What we saw at Croydon was fantastically assured and convincing: after the first few minutes I found myself ceasing to notice the people in view behind the dancers, taking for granted the fact that at times we were presented with back views of dancers, and enjoying new sorts of patterns without missing the familiar type of proscenium-arch patterns which have formed part of the essential nature of ballet for 250 years.

What Norman Dixon said at a press conference proved to be entirely justified in performance: in his dramatic ballets, where each movement has a specific meaning and emotional suggestion, the movements retain their meaning when seen in the round. It does not matter in the least if we see some important action from the side or the back: if the choreography is strong and the artists are performing well, their sides and backs are highly expressive. Moreover a ballet is essentially a matter of movement, and groupings change very frequently, so that the choreographer does not have to go to great pains (like the producer of legitimate plays in the round) to make sure that all his principal characters are seen full-face from time to time by spectators on all four sides.

It was soon clear that a ballet devised for a normal stage both gained and lost by being presented in the round. Grouping and pictorial effects were less meaningful, and so was the exact placing of the various parts of the body to the front—in fact everything that might be grouped under the heading geometry: Norman Dixon was both skilful and inventive in working out a new sort of three-dimensional geography of the stage (giving special significance to certain entrances—which became doorways to a house, a jive cellar, etc.—and using very dramatic lighting), but it was sometimes hard to build up in one's mind a total picture of what was happening all over the stage. On the other hand all dramatic effects gained enormously from being seen at close quarters; it was like seeing them in close-up on film or television, but the movements were even more moving because one saw them "live," in three dimensions, as part of a larger whole—without the limitation to a frame characteristic of film and television. For this reason the sense of participation was very vivid. In some ways it was like the view one gets of ballet from the wings; but always in such circumstances one senses that the artists are projecting their performances "out front": at Croydon they were projecting equally in all directions.

Just because movements were, so to speak, magnified, and created a keen sense of participation, they brought out in a disturbing way both the defects and assets of the choreography; goods things swept one away most powerfully, while any sequence of padding was immediately obvious for what it was. It is a measure of Norman Dixon's stature as a choreographer that his works were able to stand up to this "magnification": I hate to think what it would have done to a good many other ballets of our time.

Just as interesting as the first sight of ballet in the round was the revelation of Norman Dixon's achievement as a choreographer: this season was in some respects like a painter's first retrospective exhibition, when one can see for the first time how he has developed from juvenilia through a variety of styles, and assess his place in the contemporary world. In fact the "magnification" characteristic of theatre-in-the-round made his rapid growth to maturity—from *Voice in the Wilderness* (produced in June 1958) to his recent *Violent Rhythm*—very clear indeed.

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Very sensibly Norman Dixon put *Voice in the Wilderness* first, and gave a synopsis which made clear just why The Young Man strangles The Woman he Loves. Certain episodes stood out clearly—above all the final pas de deux, culminating in the strangling scene which he treated in an imaginative and fully choreographic manner, so that it had its proper symbolic meaning and was not just a piece of melodrama; here one could see Dixon's creative powers beginning to flower. But the music (by Ernest Bloch) was too long for the story, and the choreography included a good deal of padding. Moreover the group movements were not fully integrated with those of the two leading dancers; and the ballet really ended with the strangling; the group movements of accusation which followed were probably intended to symbolise the guilt in the young man's mind, but they were treated in too naturalistic a fashion. The same could be said of much of Norman Dixon's writhing on the floor as The Young Man, intended to represent his neurotic self-tormenting. On the other hand the ballet ended with a wonderfully simple and expressive movement of The Young Man and The Woman he Loves, walking forward into the light: I took this to mean that The Young Man became aware that the Woman's spirit understood what he had done and forgave him. The change in The Woman he Loves from a real woman to a spirit was finely conceived by the choreographer and very well interpreted by Selena Wylie: it was the sort of change which makes little sense in a naturalistic play, but can be full of meaning and very moving in the fantasy world of ballet. (There is a comparable change between Act I and Act II of *Giselle*, and in a good many Japanese No plays.) In this short and simple passage one could see Norman Dixon beginning to develop his potentialities for bringing out subtleties of human relationships, taking inspiration from Tudor's works of genius but finding his own personal approach. Such a development takes time, and a great deal of hard work and experiment: but now that Dixon has his own company one may well hope that he will make steady progress in this direction.

STREET SONG

Second in the programme came a new ballet by Terry Gilbert, *Street Song*—a pas de deux for himself and his wife Selena Wylie. After Terry Gilbert's outstanding performance in *Violent Rhythm* (not to mention his intelligently scathing analysis of certain examples of ballet criticism at a Sunday Ballet Club meeting) I had hopes of

something well worth seeing; and I was not disappointed. In *Street Song* he portrayed two lovers dancing in the street, expressing two sharply contracted moods in harmony with two sorts of music drifting into the street. I preferred their dancing in a gay, sardonic, witty jazz idiom to Elmer Bernstein's music for *Johnny Staccato* to their lyrical, "straight" dancing to George Dunning's music for *Picnic*—for in the jazz idiom Terry Gilbert's ideas were delightfully spontaneous, with a bitter-sweet atmosphere exactly in tune with the music. Selena Wylie gave proof of a fine versatility by her sensitive interpretation of the jazz idiom, contrasting sharply with the emotional intensity and lyricism she had shown in the leading female role in *The Voice in the Wilderness*. As for Terry Gilbert's dancing, it was so much at one with the choreography that one could not separate the two. The most original aspect of *Street Song* was its accompaniment, which was more like the sound track of a film (or the sound part of a television programme) than the normal musical accompaniment of a ballet: Terry Gilbert blended together music from two contrasting discs and naturalistic street noises to provide what was in effect an aural setting for his short ballet.

VIOLENT RHYTHM

Inevitably the high point of the evening was the performance of Norman Dixon's most important ballet to date, *Violent Rhythm*. This suffered at the Sunday Ballet Club performance last December because of last-minute changes of cast, and it was exciting to see it at Croydon, modified and clarified, well-cast and adequately rehearsed, at such close quarters that it reached at times an almost terrifying intensity of emotional expression. In contrast to *Voice in the Wilderness*, *Violent Rhythm* moved forward implacably to its climax, without a moment of padding or uncertainty. Some of the scenes suffered from the lack of setting—it was no longer possible for the choreographer to suggest a counterpoint of movement inside and outside a house—but he made up for this by imaginative use of lighting. In particular I was struck by some scenes in very dim lighting in which one couple moved in feverish jive-steps while the rest remained languorous: such dim lighting would not have been possible on a normal stage.

Even more impressive was the scene in which The Coloured Boy and his girl arrived at the jive cellar: suddenly the girl was whirled away from The Coloured Boy into a dance, and he was separated from her by a wall of backs. From where I was sitting I saw only the backs of the dancers, but they were completely expressive: clearly the effect would have been different from other seats, but I am sure it would have been equally expressive.

The ending still seemed to me too abrupt: the girl was accidentally stabbed, and the lights faded, almost before one could take in what had happened. This abrupt ending was consonant with the concise and elliptic "grammar" used by Norman Dixon throughout the ballet; in harmony with other major trends in the arts today, he concentrated into 20 minutes a development which a choreographer of an earlier generation would have expanded to half an hour or more. Nevertheless I think he needed to expand this final moment slightly, keeping strictly within the limits of the fast-moving dramatic style established by himself for this ballet. On the other hand it is quite possible that Norman Dixon's basic choreographic idea would have worked perfectly if the music had been specially composed for him and gave the right suggestion of finality at this point.

Elsewhere the music fitted Norman Dixon's theme amazingly well and he used it with sensitivity and resourcefulness. This was particularly true of the solo of jealousy of Her Former Boy Friend, danced by Terry Gilbert with even more twisted pride and ferocity than before: almost every note of the music found its inevitable parallel in movement. This solo stands out in my mind as the most successful use of the jazz idiom for intense dramatic expression that I have seen.

The role of Her Daughter was danced as before by Prudence Rodney, the young artist who took over this role at short notice for the Sunday Ballet Club première. She was now, as one might expect, far more assured, and had got really inside the skin of the part. Her facial expressions, clearly seen in theatre-in-the-round conditions, were particularly impressive. Norman Dixon was hampered by the fact that his features looked all wrong in a dark brown make-up. (Later in the week he changed to a light brown shade which made him look a convincing Arab or Pakistani: this small change made a surprising difference to the effectiveness of his performance and thus of the ballet as a whole.)

PRECIOSA

The programme ended with *Preciosa*, a light-hearted piece of neo-classical frothiness intended by Norman Dixon to provide a contrast with the other serious dramatic ballets. The girls' costumes (designed by Alun Jones and executed by Gilda Proudly) were delightful in cut and colour, and indeed provided a most effective contrast with the blue jeans of the other ballets. Also interesting were the stage patterns: three hundred years ago court ballets were performed in the round, and Norman Dixon recaptured something of their formal geometry. But he is not really at home in frothy frivolity; other choreographers with only a fraction of his talent do this sort of thing rather better; and *Preciosa* suffered from being seen in the ruthless conditions of ballet-in-the-round, without the veil of illusion which normally glamorises such works.

Merle Park and Alexander Grant in "the street in the rain" episode in Ballabile, *a recent Covent Garden revival*

THE CORD

Two nights later came a change of programme with the revival of *The Cord*. Slightly adapted to the arena stage, this made an impact comparable to that of *Violent Rhythm*. The most important change was the taking over by Patricia Ashworth of the part created by Ann Horn of The Mother. As Ann Horn gave the performance of her life in this part, I feared that a change might destroy part of the impact of the ballet. In fact, however, Patricia Ashworth is an artist with exceptional dramatic ability, and interpreted the role of The Mother with such passion and subtlety that the ballet did not suffer at all. Taking full advantage of the finest opportunity which has come her way since she created the title role in the Rambert production of *Laïderette*, Patricia Ashworth established powerfully the gradual change from a tender young mother, full of love for a small child, to a middle-aged woman with a bitterly jealous and over-possessive love for a grown-up son whose attraction to a young woman she cannot tolerate.

It was interesting that though in personality and style of dancing Patricia Ashworth differs considerably from Ann Horn, her interpretation of the role of The Mother was essentially the same, and made much the same impact. This could only have been the result of very careful and intelligent production by the choreographer. Other first-rate acting performances were given by the young boy John Parsons (repeating his earlier interpretation of Her Son as a Child with even more remarkable understanding and assurance) and Jane Evans, who as A Young Girl gave a striking impression of youth, spontaneity and vulnerability. In fact good acting was characteristic of the company as a whole: in the other ballets Yvonne Joseph (with dark hair, large eyes and a very expressive face) stood out in a number of small parts.

Like *Voice in the Wilderness*, *The Cord* suffered from the fact that parts of the music (by Ernest Toch) were not really essential to the development of the theme, and the choreographer was led into the presentation of scenes with soldiers which seemed irrelevant. But the best scenes succeeded admirably—notably those between The Mother and Her Son, and a very interesting pas d'action in which the influence of The Mother (jealous of Her Son's developing relationship with A Young Girl) caused him to regress back to childhood: this very complex

situation found imaginative choreographic expression in a pas de trois in which the young boy danced in movements flickering in and out between the grown-up boy and the girl.

This ballet adapted itself rather well to arena staging—particularly in the scenes when no more than three or four people were on the stage. In fact this was one of a number of lessons about ballet-in-the-round which this season established: they may be summarised as follows:

1. Like television ballet (with which it has much in common) arena ballet must at all costs be simple. Scenes in which soloists move within a complexity of group movements do not succeed. Human relationships are all-important, and must be genuine: the familiar situation in which dancers try to build up some atmosphere and characterisation out of very little is fatal to arena ballet, where faking is impossible and sentimentality intolerable. This puts a great strain on the choreographer, but one that is very good for him. Much the same applies to the dancers, who get no chance to relax or catch their breath, and must create their roles with such sincerity and feeling that they carry conviction to people on all sides—some of them very close.

2. Though arena ballet (when well produced) is effective from any direction, different seats afford very different views, and spectators who enjoy a ballet may well like to come over and over again and see it from different quarters.

3. Economically ballet-in-the-round (like theatre-in-the-round) has many advantages, and this will help choreographers by giving them a chance to put on ballets without the crippling expenses which normally afflict them and confine the production of new ballets (on a professional basis) to those few choreographers who have won the favour of the directors of old established companies. At the same time ballet-in-the-round is likely to stimulate choreographers by presenting them with new artistic problems.

MEETING OF SUNDAY BALLET CLUB

ON Sunday 6th March, at the Arts Council, the Sunday Ballet Club held a most unusual meeting at which critics, dancers, choreographers and in fact anyone interested were invited to comment on the activities of the club since its beginning (as summarised in a report) and make any suggestions for future policy.

Arthur Franks, Editor of *The Dancing Times*, was first to speak. He analysed the report in considerable detail, speaking as a "specialised critic" (i.e., one writing for one of the three ballet magazines). He made some interesting comments on the balance sheet, and suggested ways of raising more money to cover the deficits. He also commented on the remarks on critics in the report, pointing out that it was the critic's responsibility to maintain high standards. One interesting suggestion he made was that professional producers from the commercial theatre should be brought in to advise choreographers.

Peter Franklin White, speaking as a dancer, spoke in favour of strong control of the work of choreographers by an artistic director, and of much less frequent performances—perhaps one a year.

Both these suggestions seemed to me likely to destroy exactly those qualities of the Sunday Ballet Club which have enabled it to do important work, and I strongly opposed them. I pointed out that the director of a ballet company who gives employment to choreographers and dancers is quite entitled to maintain a rigidly selective artistic policy giving expression to his or her personal taste; but a body designed to give a platform to new ballets, and to which dancers and choreographers give their services without payment in the cause of art, is in a very different position. The perfect justification of the Sunday Ballet Club's policy came when Norman Dixon was allowed to put on *Violent Rhythm*, and no dictator-director informed him that such a ballet was unsuitable for production because it looked as if it was going to be like *West Side Story*.

The composer Denis ApIvor suggested that although a dictatorial artistic director was inadvisable, some positive guidance might be given to choreographers, particularly in music. He pointed out that important new work in ballet demanded the use of specially commissioned music rather than existing gramophone records, and suggested that efforts should be made to bring in young composers who would value very much the chance of getting experience in the ballet world.

Terry Gilbert pointed out that though talented choreographers have emerged in Sunday Ballet Club performances they never get a chance to earn money by working in television and the commercial theatre: the "commercial" jobs tend to go to nonentities, and he suggested that the Sunday Ballet Club should bring pressure to bear on managements to make use of the choreographic talent revealed in the ballets presented at S.B.C. performances.

By this time the discussion was well and truly launched: the above points (and many others) were taken up and argued back and forth with great animation, and the meeting lasted over two hours. By the end, a great many misconceptions had been cleared up, and some valuable basic concepts had been established. This meeting may well prove to have been just as important in the development of the work of the S.B.C. as any of its programmes.

Viewpoint

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am amazed at Fernau Hall's review of *La Fille Mal Gardée*. After praising Lanchbery's treatment of the score as "exactly what one might expect from a great opera house," he laments that the choreography makes no attempt to bring together "the best of what survives" of the choreography which has "come down to us in the usual way."

What has come down is manifestly far removed from Dauberval's original work, having been altered by one choreographer after another over the years. Mr. Hall refers to two versions seen here since the war: that staged by the former Moscow ballerina Alexandra Balashova for the Marquis de Cuevas' company, and the Ballet Theatre version based on a revival by Adolf Bolm with the choreography revised by Nijinska. These two versions were very different from each other; which does Mr. Hall prefer? The de Cuevas version itself changed from one season to another; which was the better or more authentic? And does Mr. Hall honestly prefer either of these abridged and patchwork versions to Ashton's? As for Madame Karsavina, I do not know how much she contributed to the Royal Ballet version (although the programme note implies that it was more than the "advice . . . on the mime" which Mr. Hall mentions), but her enthusiasm for the new version was apparent from her prolonged and obviously delighted applause on the first night.

Even if Dauberval's original choreography were available, however, it obviously could not be danced to the score which Mr. Hall praises. This is based mainly on a version written when Dauberval had already been dead for 22 years, and Lanchbery has now adapted it very freely to suit Ashton's requirements. It is, in effect, a new score—yet it meets Mr. Hall's approval!

Ashton and Lanchbery jointly have given new life to Dauberval's conception. Once more it "speaks to the heart." Mr. Hall finds Ashton's approach "wrong-headed"; but perhaps it is Mr. Hall who is not only wrong-headed but wrong-hearted.

JOHN PERCIVAL

Fernau Hall replies:

I am glad that John Percival has raised the question of the treatment of choreography in the Covent Garden production of *La Fille Mal Gardée*. This question is of vital importance, for the art of ballet suffers very much from the fact that in the past there was no satisfactory system of recording, so that works were lost for good when they were dropped from the repertoire for a considerable time. This means that we have no great corpus of masterpieces on which we can build our standards—the balletic equivalent of the complete works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, etc. All we have is a tiny number of ballets from various periods of the nineteenth century, each of them including a good many accretions and modifications resulting from the transmission from one maître de ballet to another and one company to another. We have, for example, no works by Sallé, Noverre and Angiolini—great pioneers of the eighteenth century. But, by wonderful luck, we have surviving elements of one ballet which brings together the talents of two great choreographers who carried on the Noverre tradition in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century: Dauberval and Didelot. This unique ballet, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, is a treasure beyond price, and no effort would be too great to reconstitute it as far as possible: by making a completely new version, Ashton has missed a wonderful opportunity, and—what is much worse—done something to muddle people's memories of the old Maryinsky production.

John Percival seems unaware of what happens when any work—ballet, ballad or epic—is passed on without written record. There are innumerable small variations, but if the work is fine enough the artists who pass it on preserve its essence, and their changes and additions are very often for the better. The staggering thing is that so much of the original (and of the best of the changes and additions) survives in one version or another, in spite of the long sequence of transmissions. This is exactly what has happened to *Giselle*, *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. Because *La Fille Mal Gardée* is much the oldest of the great ballets to survive, the work of establishing a satisfactory version would be very difficult, and (as I said) put great demands on the maître de ballet; but what an inspiring task for the right man! In fact no man could do it properly on his own; he should be the leader of a team (which should include a notator and a musician).

I cannot for the life of me understand why Mr. Percival should ask which of several versions I prefer; I thought I made it perfectly clear that a revival should bring together the best of what survives from *all* available versions, as well as the memories of old dancers. And I am even more puzzled why he should cite as evidence Madame Karsavina's applause on the first night. I also applauded loudly; and in my review I praised Ashton's ballet as the finest new production at Covent Garden for a long time. The point is that an opportunity

(Continued at foot col. 2, page 9)

THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL

in

Le Lac Des Cygnes

Performed at the Royal Opera House,
Covent Garden, London,
Saturday Matinée, March 19th

SWAN LAKE was clearly a much more ambitious choice for the School matinée than last year's *Coppélia*. One therefore could not expect such a complete triumph. Indeed I was quite apprehensive. In the event things went remarkably well—certainly quite well enough for the whole audience, and not just the friends and relations, to enjoy themselves.

Leading rôles were once again allotted to junior members of the Royal Ballet, dancing them for the first time. Even more junior members of the Company were used in such items as the Pas de Six and some of the national dances. I think it should have been made clearer in the programme precisely which dancers were already in the Company and which were among the 120 students who made up the bulk of the cast.

Obviously a new Antoinette Sibley cannot emerge at every School matinée; moreover the Royal Ballet has only recently produced an outstanding new Odette-Odile in Lynn Seymour. Georgina Parkinson's Odette was much as one might have expected; it never surprised me. I can well believe that some people found her satisfying; I thought her too self-conscious and remote, as if she was posing all the time rather than feeling the rôle. Her face is beautiful but inexpressive and I felt she overdid the fluttering of her elegant hands. And her dancing, though it had some lovely moments, was not sufficiently striking to be a satisfaction in itself.

Nor was the drama helped by Bryan Lawrence, whose bearing and demeanour seemed too contemporary—neither aristocratic nor romantic. His dancing in the Black Swan pas de deux clearly excited the audience. He did two double tours en l'air, ending on one knee, and some very high leaps. But, perhaps through nervousness, he had difficulty in recovering on getting up from his kneeling position the first time and nearly overbalanced when he landed the second. Personally, I would have preferred a less ambitious variation, more neatly executed.

Shirley Grahame's Odile was cleanly danced but it lacked excitement and brilliance. She did not attempt the fouettés, substituting a series of rapid travelled turns around the stage. I would have thought a more suitable dancer—physically, temperamentally and technically—might have been found, especially as the rôle was not being doubled with Odette. But I realise that Debra Wayne was originally scheduled for the part and her withdrawal may have caused some difficulty.

Richard Farley made about as much as anyone could of Benno and Lawrence Ruffell (so good as the cockerel in *La Fille Mal Gardée*) had a fine stab at the Neapolitan Dance, all the more praiseworthy as his partner, Jacqueline Williams, had only taken over at a day's notice.

How about the students? The first act provided most opportunity for their freshness and vitality and I thought it came over best. Karl Werlander, a 16-year-old Belgian looking a bit like a younger Graham Usher, impressed with his pleasant personality and attractive dancing in the pas de trois. Vivian Dodds as the leading peasant girl was almost too bouncy and exuberant but looked like a dancer to be watched.

The second act had two good leading Swans and four 14-year-olds as the Cygnets—the small dark one looked particularly sweet. The third act fared less well, inexperience showing up most obviously in the various national dances. Even here, however, the standard was quite creditable.

The most remarkable thing throughout was the assured way in which all these young dancers took the stage, and the smoothness of the whole production. Credit for this must go to the entire staff of the School but especially, I suppose, to Peggy van Praagh. She did not make any noticeable changes in the regular Covent Garden production this time but somehow or other she succeeded in teaching it to a new and immature cast. Now she has gone to Australia she will obviously be sorely missed. I was glad that Dame Ninette de Valois' brief curtain-speech included a tribute to her, with best wishes for her work with the Borovansky Ballet.

OLEG KERENSKY.

TELEVISION

BBC Television—Music for You—March 2nd

For once those responsible for *Music for You* had a good idea: they presented a new version of the Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*, specially arranged for television by Alfred Rodrigues.

If dancing on television is to make an impact comparable to the best of stage dancing, it must be specially arranged for the medium, and all the elements of the production must be co-ordinated to make a unified effect. Unfortunately only two of the artistic collaborators—the designer and the lighting director—really took the measure of the problem presented by these dances; but what these two artists did was so good as to make the item very well worth seeing.

The setting could not have been simpler: a ground row in front of a cyclorama (on which were projected slowly moving night clouds and a moon), together with a mottled dark floorcloth. But in conjunction with the lighting—chiefly back lighting from two powerful spots, one throwing nearer the camera than the other, and an area of dark between them—this produced a wonderful effect of moonlit and savage mystery.

Unfortunately the setting and lighting were not allowed to make their proper effect because of the banality of the camera work—which took the form of a simple alternation between two long shots (one from a high level, the other from near the floor of the studio). Patricia Foy (the producer) can do much better than this, and she was probably severely hampered by having to cram the whole thing into one end of a smallish studio. It is high time those responsible for planning *Music for You* faced up to the fact that any sort of dancing needs a good deal of space—and large-scale ballet needs a great deal of space if the camera men are to have a chance to get decent shots.

Under the circumstances it was impossible to judge the choreography, which took the shape of variations on the familiar Fokine dances; no doubt Rodrigues was just as cramped as the producer. Even so he was probably unwise to give such excessive weight to group movement, neglecting solo work almost entirely.

The singing and instrumental playing was flat and dull, conducted by Eric Robinson.

GALA—Associated-Rediffusion, 9th March

The second of the *Gala* programmes presented by Associated-Rediffusion in conjunction with the impresario S. A. Gorlinsky, transmitted from the Hackney Empire, had three main sections. First came excerpts from the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*, featuring the singers Charles Craig and Amy Shuard; then came a shortened version of the orchestral piece *Peter and the Wolf*, with commentary spoken by Richard Attenborough; and finally a shortened version of Ashton's ballet *Rinaldo and Armida*, dance by its usual cast: Beriosova, Somes, Farron and Hynd.

On the face of it the choice of *Rinaldo and Armida* was a sensible one: this ballet—as shortened by Ashton from 18 to 15 minutes—is a good length for television, and is also suitable for television in being a chamber ballet with only two main characters and two minor ones. But in fact the unfortunate director (Michael Westmore) found himself faced with choreography which was often quite unsuitable for television, presenting him with insoluble dilemmas. Over and over again Beriosova and Somes (dancing a pas de deux) moved wide apart on the Hackney Empire Stage, so that it was impossible to keep them both in shot, and the choice of one of them made partial nonsense of the choreography. This was particularly obvious at one point when Beriosova laid down on the stage, and Somes executed a few steps on his own out of shot, the camera staying with Beriosova: one could see why the director chose to remain with Beriosova—the next time this situation recurred we saw Somes performing a few cramped leaps which looked even worse on television than they do in the theatre—but it was very distracting to sense a dancer's movements from his shadow without seeing him at all. To make things worse the gremlins had a field day with the production: several times we saw a backcloth flutter, and there was one cut to a moving camera.

The best things were some normal pas de deux shots with a single camera panning with the two dancers (who kept together and were seen at full length almost filling the frame) and some close-ups of Beriosova's face. She looked radiantly beautiful, having the Marlene-Dietrich type of face (with bold cheek-bones) which makes a good picture at all angles.

G. F.

Viewpoint—continued from page 8

was lost for establishing at Covent Garden a major part of the surviving ballet tradition—something far more important than any new work by Ashton.

Mr. Percival is dead right when he points out that the Lanchbery score—freely adapted to meet Ashton's requirements—is (*a*) approved by me, and (*b*) unfitted to the original Dauberval choreography. If any company decided to reconstitute as far as possible the late Maryinsky version of *La Fille Mal Gardée* it would have to use a modified version of the late Maryinsky score.

FERNAU HALL.

PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

12th Apr	Tues.	(eve)	*La Fête Etrange, Le Baiser De La Fee* (first performance), *Pineapple Poll*
13th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Danses Concertantes, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
16th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*La Fête Etrange, Le Baiser De La Fee, Les Rendezvous*
18th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Ballabile, Antigone, Pineapple Poll*
21st ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Ballabile, La Fête Etrange, Le Baiser De La Fee*
23rd ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Rendezvous, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
25th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
28th ,,	Thur.	(eve)	*La Valse, Fête Etrange, Petrushka*
30th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Linden, Somes)
30th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Ballabile, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, Blair)
3rd May	Tues.	(eve)	*La Valse, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair)
6th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Petrushka, Les Rendezvous, Antigone*
7th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Petrushka, Les Rendezvous, Baiser De La Fee*
7th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides* (Fonteyn, Blair), *Baiser De La Fee, Firebird* (Fonteyn, Somes)
9th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
11th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Grey, Ashbridge)
12th ,,	Thur.	(eve)	*La Valse, Giselle* (Beriosova, Macleary)
17th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Baiser De La Fee, Les Sylphides, Antigone*
18th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Grey, Ashbridge)
21st ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, Blair)

THE ROYAL BALLET SOUTH AFRICAN TOUR

April 12th–30th *Alhambra, Cape Town*

FESTIVAL BALLET

Central and South American Tour

April 12th/18th	*Lima*	April 20th/25th	*Santiago*
April 27th/May 8th	*Buenos Aires*		
May 10th/23rd	*Rio de Janeiro*	May 25th/30th	*Sao Paulo*

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ITV TELEVISION

Cinderella, starring Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes, *Granada* 7.30 p.m., Wednesday, April 13th.

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First London Performance (with orchestra), at the Great Hall of Queen Mary College (formerly The People's Palace), Mile End Road, London, Saturday, April 30th, 7.30 p.m. Tickets 6/–, 5/– and 3/6d., from 9, Stanhope Mews South, London, S.W.7.

BALLET RAMBERT

W/c 18th April	*White Rock Pavilion, Hastings*
,, 25th ,,	*Wimbledon Theatre, Wimbledon*
,, 2nd May	*Theatre Royal, Exeter*
,, 9th ,,	*Granada Theatre, Slough*
,, 16th ,,	*Civic Theatre, Chesterfield*
,, 23rd ,,	*Theatre Royal, Norwich*

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Choreography by Janine Charrat
Music by Serge Prokofiev
Décor and Costumes by Jacques Dupont and Naum Sluszny

THE PRISONERS
Choreography by Peter Darrell
Music by Bela Bartok
Décor and Costumes by Barry Kay

CONCERTO DE GRIEG
Choreography by Janine Charrat
Pas De Deux

LES ALGUES (Seaweed)
Choreography by Janine Charrat Music by Guy Bernard
Décor by Louis Bertrand Castelli
Costumes by Alyette Samazeuilh
Text spoken by René Habib

LA SYMPHONIE POUR UN HOMME SEUL
Choreography by Maurice Béjart
Musique Concrète by Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer

T.R.M. Orchestra conducted by ANDRE VANDERNOOT

MODERN DANCE

by

DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN

AS the 9th personality so honoured, Martha Graham on January 19 received the Capezio Award. Such an event does more than recognize the personal achievements of the celebrated artist: it reflects the impact and vitality of modern dance (Martha Graham prefers to talk of "contemporary dance") in the United States. For this reason, it might be of special interest to analyse the status and situations of the modern dance movements in their main fortresses, Germany and the U.S.

There can be little doubt that modern dance ranks first among ethnical, jazz and classical dance in America both as far as public awareness and public appearance are concerned. While all of the 50 American States cannot boast of more than five more or less permanent companies of classical ballet, the amount of creative contribution in the field of modern dance is relatively more impressive. At the same time one can find announcements of dance performances in New York of such dance-choreographers as Fred Berk, Merce Cunningham, Paul Draper, Jean Erdman, Pearl Lang, José Limon, Paul Taylor, Joyce Trisler and Charles Weidman. In spite of the promising emergence of numerous civic ballet societies all over the United States, the so-called average man in the street is still likely to associate dance with "expressionist dancing," and to show a certain antipathy towards classical ballet, mainly based upon lack of experience of it. Ballet is supposed to be "boring" and to employ men in an effeminate way. This, of course, must be appalling to the Puritan souls of present-day Americans. It must be taken as significant that America's most prominent dance festival is the enterprise of a modern Ted Shawn (no jazz dancing at the Pillow !), that Balanchine only recently invited Martha Graham to take part in his "Episodes," that Martha Graham's dance movies could be financed and achieve world-wide appraisals and that Hanya Holm (being a Marie Wigman student) belongs to the most employed broadway choreographers.

Germany presents an entirely different picture. Just as the Viennese Waltz can dominate a whole evening at the Sheraton Plaza in Boston but not anywhere in Germany or Austria, modern dance has been betrayed in its own mother-country. The German public has revealed such a big appetite for classical ballet all too long withheld from it, that the market for modern dancers has become almost non-existent. This has decisively beaten the schools and directed the young generation into ballet classes. Marie Wigman, Berlin, Gret Palucca, Dresden, Harald Kreutzberg, Basle, as well as Margarete Hasting, Munich, and the Folkwang-school in Essen, still form little islands of their own. But their activities are defensive, and—with the exception of Dore Hoyer—no great stage personality is in sight who could continue the marvellous series of creative personalities which swept over German stages in the twenties. Even Dore Hoyer finds it easier to appear in Brooklyn than in Munich (where she performed once in eight years !). The same happens with former stars like Alexander v. Swaine who with Elsa Czobel carries on missionary work all over South-East Asia while the "home-front" gives way to mass conversions* to classical ballet. Today all the major stages are firmly conquered by the classical counter-revolution, such as Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Cologne, Nürnberg, Hamburg, Hanover.† At this point one must consider the modern dance as an entity to have become historical. This, however, does in no way degrade the great achievements and consequences which the modern movement has had on any field of stage work in Germany. As pointed out by Egon Vietta in his "Stage Dancing in Germany" (1956), modern dance has its triumph posthumous in a hundred ways. The very fact that the moderns as an entity have made themselves obsolete shows how far and how deeply the underlying principles have been absorbed into any form of stage production in Germany. As some Cubans presently prove, after a certain time it becomes silly to carry on a revolution permanently. Modern dance in Germany if disappearing as an entity has not "lost" but transformed the whole dance world.

Why has modern dance had such a different fate in Germany ? There are at least five major and interwoven reasons:

1. In the U.S. the moderns have been able to separate themselves from the all too strong ideological ties and metaphysical implications which have made the German branch subject to "cyclical trends." In Germany the dance continued to be regarded as a tool for the solution of problems which one should leave to philosophers and religion, psychoanalysts and monks.

2. As a result of (1), the American School has been able to develop strong technical systems which provide a procedure through which the dance can be transmitted independent of an overwhelmingly influential personality. In Germany those dancers who have been most striking seem to lack the pædagogical abilities to convey their art to others (cases in point: Harald Kreutzberg; Dore Hoyer).

3. In the U.S. modern dance did not have to face the gross alternative to classical ballet but could associate with ethnical and jazz dancing. In Germany the warfare remained a dogmatical one leading at times to an extreme isolation and doctrinalism of moderns.

4. Through the "musical" modern dance in the U.S. found an outlet, financial support and a stage challenge which helped to institutionalise it and provide it with healthy themes and a balance of diet. In Germany the "musical" with Munich's Willy Duvoisin probably died away before becoming of age.

5. World War II caused in Germany a veritable flight into the formal and objectified features of art and a saturation with the expressionistic elements. Classical ballet enormously profited from this change of mentality.

The American moderns trend away from the German cradle can be vividly demonstrated by a comparison of Martha Graham's and Hanya Holm's systems, since the former seems to represent an earlier, the latter a very advanced stage of this development.

While Martha Graham in her appearance, temperament and approach seems to be contemplative, almost mystical, "eastern," almost oriental and definitely ideological, Hanya Holm strikes us as being stripped of ideology, forceful, "western" and appealing to the mind of her dancers rather than to their "souls." Nevertheless, Hanya Holm possesses a personality equally impressive and dominating as Martha Graham. It seems symptomatic to find Martha Graham's class based on absolutely artistic piano accompaniment while Hanya Holm unrhythmically and very slightly stresses some points of her exercise with the help of a drum. In Holm's class aesthetic effects are welcome but only non-obligatory by-products of the exercise. No other class in ballet or elsewhere can possibly exceed the hard work of Hanya Holm's, who also seems to excel in her display of concise knowledge of anatomical facts. While both teachers have developed a "system," Graham's remains focused to her own personality to such an extent that "little Grahams" cannot be avoided. In this respect, Holm's class is "dispersonalized."

From such an analysis of the German and American moderns via a comparison of two prominent schools one might logically proceed to predict the future development of these schools. If this is permissible, then it seems unavoidable to conclude that in accordance with the larger trends Hanya Holm will "survive" for the very reasons American moderns at large "survived." However, art knows of no losers—only styles and periods.

The "Choreographers of Today" Series **(see page 12)**

will next feature

Tudor

and

MacMillan

(Our April issue featured **Jack Carter**)

* (e.g. Yvonne Georgi; Heinz Rosen).

† Kurt Jooss, who might have been expected to contribute modern choreography, has never again come near his success with *Green Table*.

CHOREOGRAPHERS OF TODAY text by **JANET SINCLAIR**

Frederick Ashton

FREDERICK ASHTON was born, as all the reference books tell us, in Guayaquil, Ecuador, in 1906, and spent his childhood in Lima, Peru. His career, interesting though it is in itself to the student of contemporary ballet, will doubtless prove fascinating to future generations as a perfect example of the classic pattern of "young-choreographer-makes-good" of the period. To begin with, he became interested in ballet because *he* saw Pavlova (not as today, "my *mother* saw Pavlova"); when he came to London he was put firmly into commerce (young men today are encouraged into the ballet, now become fashionable and respectable through the determination in the 'thirties of such men as Ashton and Tudor). Thirty years ago, for a young Englishman to want to take up ballet was regarded in most circles as a sign of dementia. However, Ashton persevered, and after a few lessons with Massine was passed on to Marie Rambert. Under her enthusiastic guidance Ashton was launched, his first ballet for her being *A Tragedy of Fashion* in 1926. He was not yet twenty.

It may be a great bore to Ashton to find himself perpetually bracketed with Antony Tudor, his contemporary and co-worker in Rambert days, but such comparison is inevitable since they are so opposed in ideals and objects, and equally important in their own way. For example, it can provide no useful basis to compare Ashton to Balanchine, another contemporary, since Balanchine's aims and final effects bear too close a resemblance to Ashton's own: in the end, one can only come down to saying "I prefer Ashton" or, as the case may be, "I prefer Balanchine." Both men are shooting at the same target—the presentation of beautiful movement, linked with care and intuition to a musical score. With this, Tudor is not concerned at all. Tudor's preoccupation has always been identical with Noverre's, that is, to present in movement different aspects of human behaviour. Tudor is a psychologist, Ashton a painter: Tudor works with the brain, Ashton is concerned with the senses. It would be hard to find two artists working in the same medium so diametrically opposed to one another in essentials, and it was this contrast which helped to make the golden days of the Ballet Club so fascinating.

When Ashton transferred his activities from the Ballet Club to the Vic-Wells Ballet, however, he had to cope with an entirely different set of circumstances, and it took him some time to adapt himself. The Ballet Club at that time was composed of an enthusiastic group of amateurs—amateurs in the best sense of the word: of young dancers and choreographers who remembered Diaghilev, who revelled in Colonel de Basil's Ballets Russes, who were filled with a boundless ambition to do likewise, on a stage the size of a pocket handkerchief. Ninette de Valois also remembered Diaghilev, but she had other plans as well. Not only did she want to produce ballets after the Diaghilev ideal, she also wanted to make it possible for an English girl to dance under her own name (or if not her own, then at least an English one); she wanted to make the word 'dancer' respected, instead of synonymous with something very derogatory indeed; in fact, she was an architect, with a plan. No one in their senses would describe Madame Rambert under this heading: pure Dionysian to de Valois' Apollonian, she burned her candle happily at both ends throughout the 'thirties, but it did, in fact, give "a lovely light." Perhaps de Valois' attitude provided Ashton with a necessary corrective to his own somewhat Dionysian leanings.

To consider Ashton's work within and without the Vic-Wells/Sadler's Wells/Royal Ballet in any detail would pack not an article, but a lengthy book. However, in default of so much space, it is rewarding to attempt to divide the body of his work into main sections and to consider the relative value of these sections. Most successful have always been those which could be described

Photo: George Platt-Lynes

SCÈNES DE BALLET

as abstract (or even 'symphonic') ballets, those in which dancing is paramount; either entirely plotless such as *Symphonic Variations* or *Scènes de Ballet*, or with a slight peg of theme such as *The Wanderer* or *Horoscope*, and if one includes under this heading the pure divertissement ballet such as *Les Patineurs*, *Les Rendezvous* or *Birthday Offering* the superiority of this branch of his work becomes even more apparent.

Ballets telling a romantic story such as *Nocturne*, *Vision of Marguerite*, *Don Juan*, *Cinderella*, *Apparitions* are also well within Ashton's scope: his first Wells success in this line, *Le Baiser de la Fée*, was a fascinating example of his early efforts to adapt himself from the small Mercury stage, with its concentration on personalities, to the broader spaces and more 'classical' attitudes of the Vic-Wells organisation. And sometimes, as with *Facade* or *A Wedding Bouquet*, he can score a comedy success, though few will mourn the passing of such damp squibs as *Les Sirènes* or *Madame Chrysanthème*. There remains two categories of works towards which Ashton seems to find himself irrevocably drawn at intervals, as though by Edgar Allan Poe's Imp of the Perverse: and both categories can produce flops so resounding as to merit the title of disaster; the first, the mythological (running from *Cupid and Psyche* to *Tiresias*), the second, the what can best be described as the "old struggle-between-good-and-evil-stuff, of which the most successful was *Dante Sonata*, the least successful *The Quest*.

Ashton, then, has attempted practically every known category of ballet save the 'psychological', and—when working within his own company—he has probably a smaller proportion of failures to his name than any other choreographer active in the same period save Massine. He has certainly the largest output of any European or American major choreographer of the past 35 years. What have been the qualities which have carried him to the position he holds today?—for with the production of *La Fille mal Gardée* he must be acknowledged at the early age of 53 to be the first Grand Old Man of English ballet, however much he might loathe such a designation. First of all, in addition to possessing an infinite capacity for the invention of purely classical movement and variations on the classical technique—a facility far greater than Balanchine's, who invents magically for his soloists yet fobs his *corps de ballet* off with steps and patterns of incredibly boring conventionality—he has an unmatched capability for showing off dancers at their best. Markova, Argyle, Fonteyn, May, Brae, Elvin and now Nerina: he shows them off to the Nth degree, and their essential qualities of movement remain etched on the mind not as Swan Queens or Sylphides but in subtle refinements of his tailor-made choreography. In choreographing for male dancers, like Tudor, Ashton has never shown the facility of invention which he displays when working with the ballerina: only two of his male classical solos stick in the mind, and in this respect he cannot seem to bring out his dancers, he can only let them make the best of what steps he can put together. In the case of Helpmann, a dominating personality and unequalled in his own style of dramatic dancing, this worked very well, for Helpmann could build the Crystal Palace out of a couple of hand mirrors (or make you believe he had done so). Since Ashton ceased creating for Helpmann, the male dancer has had to take a back seat: though Ashton has given magnificent opportunities on occasion to a character dancer (Alexander Grant in

LA VALSE

Danced before the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, at the Gala Performance in aid of the Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund on March 10th, 1959

Ondine springs to mind), and, of course, character dancers can generally be said to be more interesting than '*porteurs*'. The facility for display of individuals carries its own disadvantages, of course, since when the roles change hands the ballet tends to drop to pieces, and few spectacles can ever have been so painful as that of *Nocturne* with a total change of cast: though strangely enough this point does not apply to those two ballets in which, perhaps, the stream of his inspiration ran clearest—*Scènes de Ballet* and *Symphonic Variations*. The choreography of both of these works evolves and progresses in a truly Mozartian manner, there is no faltering from start to finish and a change of cast only sheds a fresh light on the material.

Perhaps the adjective "Mozartian" is the most appropriate of all to apply to Ashton, if it is modified to include the phrase "operatically speaking." For to Mozart, when composing an opera, the quality of the human voice, the variations in expression it can offer to the composer, were his only interest: his most exquisite music is coupled to the stupidest story imaginable ("Cosi fan Tutte"): he could take a farrago of absolute nonsense ("The Magic Flute") and draw the most ravishing and dramatic sounds and effects from his human instruments. While Ashton was obviously at a loss when faced with the dramatic inanities of *Tiresias*, yet he could still wring from this unpromising material a *pas de deux* in which nobody who saw it will ever forget either Fonteyn or Elvin (this was Fonteyn's finest characterisation—as opposed to projection of herself—ever): and he has turned a conventional and boring assortment of old clichés into his most artlessly charming work—*La Fille mal Gardée*.

With Ashton, then, the movement is all. Also, he can only be at his best when working with the very best (consider the appalling fiascos of *Le Rêve de Léonore* or *Les Illuminations*). And this means at the present time working with a Fonteyn, a Nerina, or—more remote—an Alonso, Struchkova, Markova. Let us hope his recent success with *La Fille* will encourage him to make more ballets for Nerina. It makes one a little sad, however, to think of all the Ashton ballets we shall presumably never see again; what would one not give to see *Horoscope* and *The Wanderer*, and (just for the present writer) *The Judgment of Paris*—though perhaps, without the beautiful Pearl, this little masterpiece is best left in oblivion.

LES RENDEZVOUS

SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

BACK

AUSTRALIANS at Covent Garden. Among the 128 students who took part in the Royal Ballet School performance of *Swan Lake* were (front to rear) Wendy Self and Lynette Ward from Newcastle, N.S.W., Carole Hart and Karlene Duff both from Sydney, and Robin Webb from Brisbane.

ANNETTE CHAPPELL, who has been a member of the Munich State Opera Ballet since 1955, has recently given birth to her first child, a boy. Miss Chappell, who before she joined the Munich Staatsoper was with the English Ballet Rambert, is married to Igor Barczinski. The proud parents say they have chosen the name of Michael for the new arrival "because it is a name that exists in all languages." Congratulations to them both.

A delightful new photograph of
in an Uzbek Dance, "Pakhta" (

RONALD HYND

ANNETTE PAGE

Looking for antiques for their home in one of their brief off-duty spells. They were married in 1957, and have been dancing major roles together for some time with the Royal Ballet.

TAGE

ev Dance Company
Photo by E. Umnov

ANTOINETTE SIBLEY shares her birthday cake with the Mayor of Johannesburg, Mr. Alec Gorshel, at a party given for the Royal Ballet in the lovely gardens of the Johannesburg Zoo.

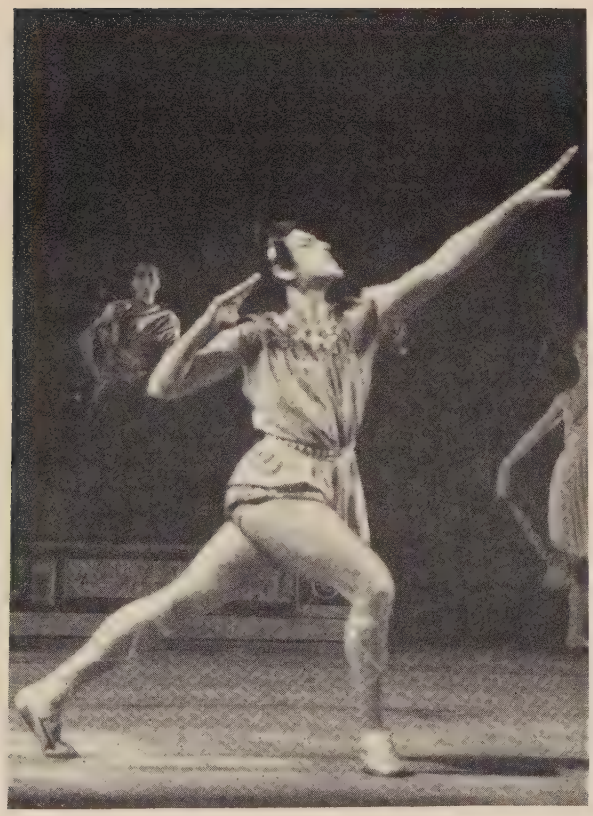
ANN STONE the 15-year-old English girl from the Doreen English School at Putney, invited by the Russians to study dancing at the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet school, is now also taking piano lessons. Seen here practising in the home of some of her Russian friends in Moscow. A bust of Lenin rests on the piano.

TONI LANDER
JOHN GILPIN
BELINDA WRIGHT

At the Airways Terminal before their departure for Mexico City.

A scene from the ballet Spartacus. *Gladiators clash in the circus, dying for the amusement of the Roman patricians. This photograph gives an idea of the vast Bolshoi production, which includes a cast of* 500.

Nikolai Fadeyechev



BY NINA KARASYOVA

NIKOLAI FADEYECHEV, a leading male dancer at the Bolshoi Theatre, was born in Moscow in 1933. The son of a lorry-driver, he entered the Moscow Ballet School at the age of 10, and was trained by Alexander Rudenko, an outstanding teacher of classical dancing and one of the Bolshoi Theatre's star ballet dancers of the past.

Fadeyechev made his début at the school graduation performance in 1952 as the Prince in Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*.

Following his début, he was accepted in the Bolshoi Theatre's ballet company. Appearing on its stage first in small parts (the Blue Bird in Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*, Bernard and the Cavalier in the Grand Pas of Glazunoff's *Raymonda*, and Phoenix in Glière's *Red Poppy*), he gradually worked his way up to the more complex roles of the Prince in *Sleeping Beauty*, Siegfried in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, Albert in Adam's *Giselle*, Harmodius in Khachaturyan's *Spartacus*, Frondoso in Krein's *Laurencia*, Waclaw in Asafiev's *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, Danila in Prokofiev's *Tale of the Stone Flower*, and lastly Romeo in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. He dances all these parts with great ease and lightness, taking care to retain the pattern of each dance intact. His plasticity—each pose, gesture and line of his body—is utterly graceful, beautiful and unmarred.

His roles are very diverse in character. His Siegfried believes in the power of love, in his happiness, and is capable of winning it. The best-loved of his roles is Albert in *Giselle*, which he first danced during the Bolshoi's tour of London in 1956, with Galina Ulanova, the unsurpassed Giselle, as his partner. As interpreted by him, Albert is a deeply human and dramatic character.

Left: Fadeyechev in the role of Harmodius in Spartacus.

of the Bolshoi Ballet

His role of the hot-headed Frondoso called for flawless classical technique and a fine knowledge of the character dance. In Khachaturyan's *Spartacus* he gives an excellent rendition of the part of Harmodius, Spartacus' comrade-in-arms—a man of complex and tragic destiny.

Recently Fadeyechev has appeared in the part of the Russian stone-cutter Danila in Prokofiev's *Tale of the Stone Flower*. His interpretation of this character is very individual and original.

At present the dancer is rehearsing the part of Romeo in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*.

A very interesting dancer, who tries to impart something new and entirely his own to each of his roles, Fadeyechev continues to train under the well-known ballet teachers, A. Varlamov, M. Gabovich, Maria Semyonova and A. Rudenko.

His partners are ballerinas of world renown, such as Galina Ulanova, Maya Plisetskaya, Raisa Struchkova and Nina Timofeyeva. Fadeyechev is well known both within the Soviet Union and abroad—in Great Britain, the U.S.A., Canada, France, West Germany, Poland, China and Finland.

British ballet-lovers will remember his performance in the television production of *Giselle* in 1958, with Nadia Nerina as his partner.

Fadeyechev hopes to perform a number of roles in ballets on modern themes.

He is married to Nina Fetisova, solo dancer of the Bolshoi Theatre. He spends his leisure hours painting, studying music or angling.

The Fadeyechevs usually go to the Bolshoi Theatre's Rest-Home outside of Moscow, on their days off, and spend the two months of their summer holidays in the south.

Photos above and right: The Bolshoi Theatre Ballet production of Swan Lake, *with Fadeyechev as the Prince*

Above: With Ulanova in Giselle, *photograph taken during the Bolshoi's appearance in London in* 1956. *Photo by Houston Rogers*
Below: Fadeyechev as Prince Albert (photograph taken in Moscow)

RÔLES DANCED

The Prince, in Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*
(At graduation performance of Moscow Ballet School, 1952)

Bernard, The Cavalier in "Grand Pas" } in Glazunoff's *Raymonda* — at Bolshoi Theatre

Phoenix, in R. Glière's *Red Poppy* — at Bolshoi Theatre

Siegfried, with R. Karelskaya, with M. Plisetskaya } in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* — at Bolshoi Theatre

Blue Bird, The Prince } in Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* — at Bolshoi Theatre

Albert, with G. Ulanova, with N. Nerina } in Adam's *Giselle* — at Bolshoi Theatre
(in TV production of *Giselle* in London, 1958)

Harmodius
with M. Plisetskaya in Khachaturyan's *Spartacus* — at Bolshoi Theatre

Frondoso, with M. Plisetskaya, with N. Timofeyeva } in Krein's *Laurencia* — at Bolshoi Theatre

Danila
with M. Kondratyeva in Prokofiev's *Tale of the Stone Flower*
at Bolshoi Theatre

Romeo
with M. Kondratyeva in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*
at Bolshoi Theatre (in rehearsal)

Waclaw, in Asafiev's *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*
on tour of the Soviet Union

Pauline Noorts*
in
Children of the Mist
with
The Wellington City Ballet

Photo: Cyril Pascoe

**Miss Noorts danced under the name of Pauline Jones when in the corps with the Australian National Ballet.*

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by György Csizmadia

THE REMAINDER OF THE ROYAL BALLET SEASON IN JOHANNESBURG
reported by Mary Kenwood

BALLET IN MUNICH

reported by Ingeborg Zürner

AFTER having quite successfully produced *Swan Lake*, Heinz Rosen now turned to modern works and presented *Joan of Zarissa* and *Danza*, both by Werner Egk, the latter being a world première.

This is the third time within the twenty years of its existence that *Joan of Zarissa* has been produced at the Munich State Opera, and according to those who have seen all three versions, the present one is the best. It is the story of the victorious knight Joan, a variation of Don Juan, who comes to the court of the Iron Duke, falls in love with his wife Isabeau, slays the jealous husband, and seduces her, but leaves her on their coronation day for the young actress Florence. He falls a victim to drink and ends in despair, haunted by the phantoms of his past.

The very first impression one got was of immense spaciousness. Helmut Jürgens has designed a very beautiful decor with white fleurs-de-lis on dark ruby walls which, together with a few pieces of stylised furniture, suggested a late mediæval, courtly atmosphere. The costumes of Charlotte Flemming were attractive and in harmony both with the scenery and the style of the dances.

Heinz Rosen made full use of the unusually large stage for the solemn entry procession of the court, the ceremonial dances of the third scene, and also for the first appearance of Joan, which was very effectively announced by two colour-bearers. The first pas de deux of Isabeau and Joan was echoed on the higher back part of the stage by the jester Lefou and his beloved, Perette, thus heightening its impact. After using it as a platform for the actors, Rosen once more exploits its effect when in the final scene the dying Joan is haunted by a vision of his life and is unable to push away these phantoms since they exist on a different level. The choreography, though a little static at times, was imaginative and told the story by means of dance without the introduction of heavy mime scenes. There was a dynamic fight between a gigantic knight and Joan, a powerful, dramatic pas de deux, when Isabeau, exhausted by grief and her struggle against Joan, finally yields to him. The gay dance of Lefou with two kitchen maids brought the necessary dramatic relief just before the climax. The scene of the actors' performance conveyed all the clumsy melodramatic "realism" of an amateur spectacle. Besides Rosen has created some powerful dramatic characters.

Natascha Trofimova had the cool authority and aloofness in the first scene to make one believe that Isabeau does not yield easily to Joan, that her mourning for her husband is sincere just as her initial furious hatred for Joan, and that her eventual yielding is really due to sheer exhaustion. She has a perfect command of the stage, an assured, highly expressive technique and a very individual elegance. Heino Hallhuber as Joan gave an exciting performance and was the ideal foil for Trofimova. He radiated a magnetic power and, when he suddenly appeared in the chapel of mourning, clad in bright red, his eventual triumph was inevitable. He acted with conviction and his dancing possessed subtle strength and attack. Hannes Winkler danced the jester Lefou, as both a naïve fool whose mood changes from highest spirits to deepest dejection in his dance with the doll, as well as a villain, a bit like Iago, enjoying the mischief he has caused. He showed great abilities as a character dancer and athletic subtlety. Svea Köller gave a wonderfully grotesque Perette and one was never quite sure whether she was a puppet, a human being, or possibly even a philosopher, especially when she gave a commentary in her peculiar way to the songs to verses by Charles d'Orléans, which were interpreted by Liselotte Fölser and Kieth Engen with an admirable feeling for the style of the ballet. The only weak point in this work was Helma Kühl, who, though she was a very pretty Florence, yet lacked personality and dramatic conviction.

Joan of Zarissa was followed by *Danza*, a suite of pure dancing. It was set to Werner Egk's six variations on a Caribbean theme. The dances, with the exception of the lyrical fifth variation, "Evocation," were light-hearted, quick and sometimes technically brilliant. Heinz Rosen has devised some very attractive dances for the corps de ballet which they performed well and with verve. Natascha Trofimova danced a brilliant allegro variation, all on full points, which only a strong technician like her could have survived without having all her toes broken. I wonder why she was given a costume so completely different from all the rest, black over-all tights and long black hair, while all the other girls wore some kind of colourful practising tunics together with tutus and, to remind one of the Caribbean theme, they sometimes had sombreros. The best costumes for this ballet (again by Charlotte Flemming) were those for the dance of the hens and the cockfight, done with strength and wit by Rainer Köchermann and Heino Hallhuber, though I felt that the former especially was a little too reminiscent of the music hall. Dulce Anaya's impeccable, gracefully effortless technique was seen to full advantage in the second variation which she danced with five cavaliers (Köchermann, Hallhuber, Baur, Schöner, Winkler) and again in the lyrical pas de deux of the fifth variation, partnered by Rainer Köchermann who made a fine impression in his solo in the fourth variation, where he had shown a good classical technique with high elevation and beautiful line.

The decor by Helmut Jürgens consisted of a gaily coloured back cloth and some nets hung between poles, again a suggestion of the sunny Caribbean theme.

Werner Egk conducted his own works, inspiring the orchestra to give their best, and so the artistic standard throughout the evening was a high one, which the audience acclaimed in an ovation lasting 20 minutes.

IRÈNE SKORIK as Odette-Odile was a revelation. Once before, in Giselle, she has shown that she is one of the great ballerinas of today able to stand comparison with Chauviré's or Fonteyn's interpretation of the rôle. Now that she has had the chance of attempting another of the great classics, and was so completely successful, one regrets that she has not always the necessary background of a large company.

In Act II she is a true Queen of the Swans, unafraid of the huntsmen as she steps between them and her companions, and even when she begs the Prince's protection she still remains essentially a queen. Only with her awakening love for Siegfried it becomes apparent that, after all, she, too, is an unhappy young girl suffering under the spell of the Magician, for the first time in her life experiencing true love. She forgets her sad imprisonment for a short spell of happiness.

With Skorik the fourth act was not only an inevitable apotheosis. Odette returns from the palace where she has seen the Prince promise marriage to Odile, hurt to the depths of her soul, and one feels that now she would no longer have the strength to protect her companions. Even when the Prince returns to her her happiness does not, for she now realizes that their love must be the means of saving her companions. Skorik has a fine, assured technique with a beautiful line, wonderful équilibre, and very expressive, high legs. Her arabesque has that inimitable, Russian subtlety and her port de bras are lyrically fluid, though intelligently stylized. Her acting was simple and therefore carried complete conviction. (Unfortunately she was not helped by the uninspired playing of the orchestra under Sigismund Mayr, and often some of the tempi was wrong. This is especially trying for a dancer of such musical sensitivity as Skorik).

As Odile she has a magnetic quality. She really is the evil Magician's daughter; whenever her eyes meet his she seems to receive a new impulse and redoubles her efforts to win Siegfried. Though she tries to imitate Odette's manner, her true, evil nature immediately breaks through again, but the Prince is so bewitched by her personality that he is no longer free in his decisions. In this act Skorik's technique has a diamond-like brilliance and her Odile makes light of the most difficult enchaînements which come so naturally to her. To everybody who knows Skorik as the lyrical, romantic dancer of *La Sylphide* this brilliance and imperious authority came as a surprise and it shows that she has now developed into a mature artist capable of a large range of rôles.

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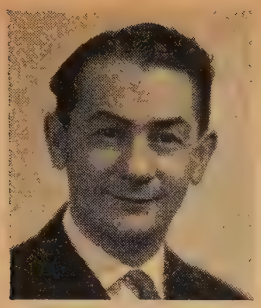

A FAMILY AFTERNOON IN TOKYO

by John Haylock

AT four o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, February 21st, ten ballet schools and companies got together to show the mettle of their pupils and their younger dancers. Tickets were only 4*s*. (or 3*s*. from an old man in the street outside the theatre) and all the seats were unreserved. At 3.30 p.m. the head was already getting mixed up with the tail of a thick serpentine queue that was winding itself untidily round the foyer, and at 4 p.m. the doors were opened and there was a rush and a scramble for seats; in three minutes the auditorium was full. The pleasing fact about the spectators was that half of them were young, and all of them were keen on ballet. It was evident that many in the audience were pupils or dancers themselves.

Nearly all the 21 items on the programme were danced to a tape recorder. This was a great disadvantage, but as most rehearsing is done to taped music the dancers are used to it.

Spanish dancing seems to be getting popular in Japan, for a quarter of the items were Spanish or Spanish-type; however, the dancers did not seem to have mastered the difficult techniques of the Spanish dance with sufficient proficiency to be taken seriously.

One of the interesting recitals was *Hagoromo* (The Robe of Feathers) which was based on a Noh play of that name. A fisherman finds a robe and is about to take it home when an angel appears and says it belongs to her. At first the fisherman wants to keep it but he agrees to return it if the angel will dance for him. She dances in the robe and then disappears. A slight theme of this kind is typical of a Noh play, and, it would seem, appropriate for adaptation to ballet. But there are problems: one is that Japanese music and Japanese costumes do not go with western style ballet steps. *Hagoromo* was accompanied by two *koto* (a horizontal Japanese harp) and a *samisen* (the three-stringed Japanese guitar); the fisherman wore the tight trousers and the short jacket of a countryman which were suitable for dancing in, but the girl wore a loose kimono from which a leg could protrude, and when it protruded it seemed wrong, almost suggestive. Although the little ballet was not a success the Yukako Suzuki Ballet School should be congratulated for presenting it as they attempted to do something which should be done more in Japan—ballets with a Japanese background. It should be possible to adapt the woman's kimono; the man's dress, at least the countryman's dress, hardly requires any change. As for the music, the *samisen* and the *koto* are not suitable, but modern music by a Japanese composer, based on traditional Japanese music, would be.

The Komaki Ballet School presented *Russian Ballet* with music by Shostakovich and choreography by Mr. Naoto Seki, the premier danseur of the Komaki Company; it was by far the best piece in the programme. Miss Reiko Narai, Miss Kioko Arami and Miss Sakiko Arai were the three leading dancers in this abstract ballet that consisted of a "gallop-in," two polkas, a waltz, a grand waltz and a "gallop-out." The three ballerinas were in white, red and yellow tutus and the corps de ballet in electric blue ballet skirts; they were not only the most tastefully dressed but also the most skilled dancers of the afternoon. They danced with precision and assurance; the ballet went with a swing that was altogether professional.

Mr. Akira Egawa's Ballet Company did the Grand Pas de Deux from *The Sleeping Beauty* (a great favourite here) and an abstract piece called *Ballet Poème*. Mr. Egawa danced the Prince and Miss Kiéko Mizuna, Aurora. Both were good. Mr. Egawa's pas seul was very competent; he has an excellent figure for dancing and moves well. The music for *Ballet Poème* was Grieg's piano concerto and the choreography was by Mr. Egawa. There were four danseurs and a corps de ballet of ten. The Grieg concerto is difficult to dance to, but the company danced with a discipline that showed they were well trained; they also kept up the pace and held one's interest, and that is no easy thing to do in an abstract ballet with poorly reproduced taped music. Mr. Egawa's company possesses talent.

The others, apart from Miss Asami Miki's Company that did four Grande Marches (*Coronation* by Meyerbeer, *Imperial March* by Elgar, *The March of the Egyptians* from *Aida*, and the *Grand March* from *Tannhäuser*) which they had done earlier in the month at Miss Tachibana's (Miss Maki's mother) thirtieth anniversary recital, were only passable. But they all deserve praise for showing so obviously their enthusiasm for the dance.

Jack Anderson from San Francisco

THAT perennial artistic problem child, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, arrived and again caused balletomanes to fret with dismay. For many years this company has been only the shadow of its former self. It manages to dance on, but always with the same problems.

This year improvement was noted in one area—that of performance. The corps, though still imperfect, was better disciplined than it has been for several seasons, and the leading dancers included Alonso, Youskevitch, Krassovska, Zoritch and Nina Novak.

The great problem, however, is still the repertoire. Though the Ballet Russe once produced acclaimed works by great modern choreographers, the only serious work still performed is *Ballet Imperial*. The other contemporary pieces range from fine comedies to sheer dross.

The season's première, *Ballad* (Jan Cieplinski-Herbert Donaldson), despite its score by a young American composer, was an elaborately silly pas de trois.

Put politely, the company emphasises the classics. Put accurately, it over-performs them. Alonso and Youskevitch are superb in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* and Irina Borowska will soon be a very fine Myrtha. But these assets are weakened by uncertainties in the ensemble and dilapidated decors.

America has always loved the Ballet Russe. We tend to be indulgent and excuse its faults. But these faults persist season after season. Isn't there anyone who could give this delinquent a spanking to set it right again?

Both the San Francisco Ballet and the Ballet Russe, though America's two oldest companies (the former being 27 years old and the latter 21), are presently composed primarily of young dancers.

In contrast to the Ballet Russe, the San Francisco Ballet has an integrated ensemble and neatly staged productions. Furthermore, it does not exploit the classics in an effort to hide an impoverished contemporary repertoire.

The extended winter–spring season at the Alcazar Theatre afforded local audiences the best chance they have ever had to appraise the company's strengths and weaknesses.

Its first bill contained the *Nutcracker* pas de deux and three ballets by Lew Christensen.

Balletino (Vivaldi) employs the concerto form of Vivaldi's period and pits a concertino of soloists against a ripieno (ensemble). Its interest lies in the tension between these groups.

Filling Station (Virgil Thomson), though over twenty years old, remains amusing Americana depicting, in comic strip fashion, the people who visit Mac's filling station in the course of a night. It is curious that, since the 'thirties and 'forties, few choreographers, with the exception of Jerome Robbins, have used American themes. Perhaps we are less nationalistic today, or perhaps our interest has shifted to abstract ballets. The production of *Filling Station* is a good reminder that American experience can be successfully translated into ballet, without becoming provincial.

Con Amore (Rossini), the closing ballet, is a piece of bouffant nonsense, in which two love affairs are righted by a deus ex machina Cupid. Though there was nothing deeply moving here, the ballets opened the season in a most festive manner.

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t.v. IN FRANCE

LE ROSSIGNOL ET L'EMPEREUR DE CHINE (The Nightingale and the Emperor of China)—French Television.

Ballet is taking a more and more important place on French television—notably in Lucienne Bernadac's programme *Musique pour vous* (Music for You) which has now become famous. Working with her on this programme is the young choreographer Juan Corelli, who is not only one of the most attractive figures among the young people in French ballet but one of the very rare choreographers who understand the resources and the possibilities which television offers to dancing.

In the course of two years Juan Corelli has arranged six or seven ballets which have attracted the interest not only of viewers but also of the critics. Among his latest productions we may pick out *The Nightingale and the Emperor of China*, based on Stravinsky's score, directed by J. P. Carrière, with sumptuous costumes by Claude Catulle, and an evocative setting by F. de Lamothe.

The work (which is a fairy-tale and, at the same time, has philosophic undercurrents) has a well-known story: the Emperor of China is on the point of being taken by Death when he hears the singing of the nightingale. The latter deflects Death from her victim and sends her far away. When the courtiers come to take away the body of the Emperor for the funeral, they find it living, and are both joyful and frightened.

The great Rosella Hightower dances the Nightingale with her well-known talent, sensitivity and technical assurance. Vladimir Skouratoff, with his admirable versatility, succeeds very well in interpreting the role of the Emperor. It is Claire Motte, as Death, who seeks to take the Emperor away from the land of the living: never has this young artist been so expressive and convincing, nor shown so powerful a stage presence, even at the Opéra. The stars are well supported by Yvonne Meyer, Roland Casenave (spirited in the role of a buffoon), Dany Colletin, Regine Boury and a young danseuse given her first chance by Corelli: Claudine Degeilh. We shall certainly hear more of this young soloist, who has outstanding talent.

My only regret about this production (for which Corelli's moving choreography established a strong atmosphere) is that French Television was unable to transmit it in colour. This is a very minor regret, and one which redounds to the credit of Lucienne Bernadac, who took every possible trouble to make this production as perfect as possible.

JEAN SILVANT

INVITATION A LA DANSE, a programme by Robert Favre le Bret with Geneviève Guillot and Milorad Miskovitch's company Les Ballets 60. Directed by Pierre Viallet.

One again here is the *Invitation to the Dance* programme of Monsieur Robert Favre le Bret, Secretary-General of the Opéra. They are right in transmitting this programme at a late hour: in this way they do not risk demoralising the children who dream of becoming dancers, and keep the programme beyond the ken of television critics, already asleep by this time. But ballet critics are more hardy folk: perhaps they have had more training in watching bad shows.

As usual the programme was divided into two parts. The first part purported to make clear to the viewer the beauties of *adage*, while the second was devoted to the presentation by Milorad Miskovitch's company Les Ballets 60 of *Funambules*, a work created some years ago at Monte Carlo (under the name *Rideau Rouge*) with choreography by John Taras and music—if one may call it music—by Richard Blareau.

Let us, then, examine the first part: *adage* in the class of Mme. Guillot (Mme. Favre le Bret). Mme. Guillot teaches at the Opéra. I have never seen her classes, and if I had to count on M. Viallet's shots to form an opinion about them (which Heaven forbid) I should be very badly informed. According to M. Viallet, and so far as one can judge from his framing, dancers are all Venuses de Milo whose legs have been knocked off. The effect produced by the loss of the lower limbs in a step like an arabesque must be seen to be believed. Let us pass on: if one day I want to find out what the classes of Mme. Guillot are like, I shall go and see them, trying to forget the pictures produced by M. Viallet.

I liked *Rideau Rouge* (Red Curtain) when John Taras choreographed it for a programme at Monte Carlo. His mistake—his only one—was to allow M. Richard Blareau to place alongside this ballet what he is the only person to call music. The ballet was danced by Marie-Claire Carrié, Veronika Mlakar, Claire Sombert, Milko Sparemblek, Vassili Sulich and Milorad Miskovitch. Along with rebaptising this ballet *Funambules*, however, this self-styled director Pierre Viallet)

(*Continued at foot col. 1, page 27*

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QUIZ

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The cash prizes offered to competitors who entered all three competitions—December, February and March issues, have been awarded to the following for the highest number of marks.

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Ballet 9

SERGE LIDO

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This competition was a wonderful success and many hundreds of entries were received from dancers, teachers, balletomanes and others. The competitors were asked to choose the 12 dancers they would include in *Great Ballerinas of Today*—a new volume to be published shortly in the celebrated *Dancers of Today* series, and also to choose the 12 male dancers they would include in a companion volume to be published later this year.

No fully correct entries were received, but the competitor whose choice coincided most nearly with the Editor's named 20 out of the 24 dancers. Ten guineas' worth of books on ballet have therefore been despatched to:

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RECORD GUIDE

CAPRICCIO ESPAGNOL

Massine, Carmen Amaya, José Greco, to name but a few, have all choreographed Rimsky-Korsakov's Iberian piece which no one would mistake for anything else but Russian. But nearly all his compatriots had an urge to possess a place in the Mediterranean sun. Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien*, on the reverse side of the present record, RCA. RB16180, was born as a result of a visit to Italy where he completed his Fourth Symphony. The Russian conductor, Kiril Kondrashin, takes an exciting and brilliant view of these two works, bringing out interesting colours and details which are usually lost. It is a disc which should prove popular even though it is somewhat short measure and the orchestra sometimes a little ragged.

LA GÉOGRAPHIE EN IMAGES

Both Canada and France have seen ballets inspired by Dvorak's *New World Symphony—La Géographie en Images* by Maurice Morenoff and *Variations dans un Style Romantique* by Ferdin Lallement—and what a wonderful work it is. It abounds in memorable tunes which were surely influenced by his sojourn in America as Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Wolfgang Sawallisch is to be congratulated on a fine rendering, which brings out the dramatic intensity and the flowing lyricism, and the Philharmonia on its superlative playing, Columbia 33CX1677. It may not have the Toscaninian drive but I believe is thereby the more enjoyable. Dvorak's *Carnaval Overture* makes a delightful fill up.

LA PÉRI

I do not know if it was certain outside criticism that swayed Ashton to alter his original choreography, but for me the change was not an improvement and I never experienced the same amount of enjoyment as I did from the early performances. Dukas' music is constantly being criticised but I do not think that calls for anything more than pity for those who cannot derive pleasure from it. Ansermet's rendering on another disc in Decca's Favourite Ballet Music series, BR3030, is sheer delight. He includes the fanfare—not used by Ashton—which was added much later by Dukas and here the tone is coarse and unsatisfactory, but being an entity of its own at the end of the first side, it matters little. Of this conductor's *L'Après-midi* (also first side), I still hold to what I said in BALLET TODAY of September 1958, which was: "a thing of great beauty, delicately phrased and poetic though I feel the afternoon could be a little more sultry."

TILL EULENSPIEGEL

Nijinsky, Balanchine and Babilée are among the famous names in the choreographic world that have been tempted by the story of the fourteenth century practical joker and Richard Strauss' symphonic poem, which also formed part of the score for Mona Inglesby's ballet, *Everyman*. Though it would seem an ideal book for a ballet, it has never met with real success—certainly not the success of Strauss' musical pictures. Rudolf Kempe has become one of the leading conductors of this composer's works and gives a well controlled and sensitive account of this particular one—you can live with this disc, HMV. ALP1759, more easily than many others of more vivid colouring and it also gives us an excellent *Don Quixote*, depicted by that great 'cellist, Paul Tortelier. It is bound to find many friends.

THE PRISONERS

This is Peter Darrell's ballet which he set to Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* for the Western Theatre Ballet. This music must have attraction—Milloss' *Mystère*, May O'Donnell's *Dance Concerto* and MacMillan's *Journey* for American Ballet Theatre are all to the same score—but not as Stokowski conducts it on Capitol P8507. There has always been a danger that he will swamp a piece with his own personality and on the reverse side Martin's *Petite Symphonie Concertante*—MacMillan's *Laiderette*—fares only a little better.

TV IN FRANCE (*Continued from page 24*)

must have made certain changes to the choreography of John Taras, notwithstanding the fact that Taras has rather more qualifications in this field than him. Such a massacre should be forbidden by a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Ballets. The work of the creator of the ballet put to one side, a close-up of *deboulés* superimposed on the face of an artist: really, this gentleman with his passion for gimmicks should occupy himself with a magic lantern.

But was he alone in this massacre? Unfortunately no. Unless I am mistaken, the scherzo of the ballet was originally danced by Marie-Claire Carrié. This time it was Miskovitch who interpreted it.

You may well ask: does not French Television ever show good ballets? The answer is "very rarely." JEAN COQUELLE

Pictures at an Exhibition

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BALLET IN NEW ZEALAND

reported by KEITH WOODS in Auckland

Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield as they appeared in Giselle Act II, with the Royal Ballet, London. *Photo:* Houston Rogers.

NEW ZEALAND BALLET COMPANY

The New Zealand Ballet Company programme toured in the latter half of 1959 consisted of *Peer Gynt* (choreography Poul Gnatt, music Grieg, decor Salie Berry, book after Ibsen) and *Stranger in Paris* (choreography Poul Gnatt, music Offenbach, decor Salie Berry). *Peer Gynt* is the most ambitious work yet created by Poul Gnatt, and although not his best, is a creditable attempt. In two acts and seven scenes, running for 90 minutes, it closely follows the immortal drama. Although several scenes were overdrawn, some, such as the Troll's, were among Poul Gnatt's best, and at least one pas de deux was the equal of anything he has done.

Stranger in Paris is a light divertissement with the gay choreography in which Poul Gnatt excels. Throughout the programme the decor and costumes were good, as was the dancing. Poul Gnatt danced and mimed as well as ever, Gloria Young has greatly improved her mime and remains an excellent dancer, Graeme Pickering is now one of New Zealand's outstanding dancers, and the other dancers, particularly the men, included some of great promise.

A short season of *Coppelia* was given in New Plymouth and in late February, with the company supplemented with Wellington dancers, performances of *Prince Igor*, *Prismatic Variations* and *Rhapsodia* (a new ballet by Poul Gnatt to the music of Liszt's first and second Hungarian Rhapsodies) were given as part of the annual New Plymouth arts festival. Set in an open-air theatre they were very attractive and the method of presenting *Prince Igor* made it much more real than is possible in a conventional theatre.

It is expected that the 1960 tour, which commences in mid-April, will be *Facade*, *Petrouchka*, *Prismatic Variations* and *Four in a Glasshouse*. *Prismatic Variations* (choreography Poul Gnatt and Russell Kerr, music Brahms' St. Antoni Variations, decor Salie Berry) was first presented by United Ballet last year, and *Four in a Glasshouse* was made by Poul Gnatt for the New Zealand Ballet Company in 1955.

KALNINS BALLET THEATRE

One of our leading amateur groups, the Kalnins Ballet Theatre, presented a short but ambitious season in Christchurch last November. Consisting of *Les Preludes*, *Pulcinella*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Tchaikovsky) and *La Boutique Fantasque*, all with choreography by Irina Kalnins, it was very well received by audiences and critics.

WELLINGTON CITY BALLET

Another amateur group, the Wellington City Ballet, presented a season of new ballets late in February. The main work, based on a Maori legend and with original music by New Zealander Christopher Small, is a lengthy piece in two acts. Named *Children of the Mist* it is in classical style and suffers mainly from a long and complicated story. Of the programme I preferred *Pavane* (Faure) and *Clair de Lune*, although there was much of value in *Orchestral Suite* (Stravinsky - Dohnanyi - Poulenc), *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and *Children of the Mist*. All choreography was by Miss Leigh Brewer, one of our leading dancers and teachers, and the decor and costumes, which were magnificent, were by Harry Baker.

VINTAGE YEAR

The past year has been a vintage one for the quantity and quality of ballet seen here, and the indications are that 1960 will equal it. Besides seasons and tours by indigenous groups we are to have the pleasure of seeing Beryl Grey, Bryan Ashbridge and two other dancers in a recital tour of the Dominion in May; another tour is to be made by an ensemble from the Bolshoi Ballet later in the year; and in April the Borovansky Ballet, under the direction of Peggy van Praagh, will commence a four-month tour.

NEWS

A new group under the tentative name of the New Zealand Ballet (as differing from the New Zealand Ballet Company (Incorporated)) has been formed with Rowena Jackson, Sara Neil, Philip Chatfield, Walter Trevor, Poul Gnatt and Russell Kerr as directors for a Wellington season of the United Ballet programme, with Poul and Walter as ballet-masters. The principals are the same as for United (Rowena and Philip will not be dancing) and the majority of the supporting soloist and corps de ballet will be from Wellington.

UNITED BALLET

Keith Woods writes: "As I was connected with the administration and publicity of United Ballet's first season, I feel I cannot write about it without bias. Where before, for instance, have we seen such magnificent decor as in *Prince Igor*, heard an orchestra and choir as excellent, seen costumes as good as those in *Prince Igor* and *Les Patineurs*, witnessed such sparkling choreography or experienced such fabulous dancing as that presented by Rowena Jackson, Sara Neil, June and Russell Kerr, Poul Gnatt, Walter Trevor, and the other fifty-one dancers?"

As Editor of this magazine I feel I cannot let such an important event in the history of New Zealand ballet pass without being put on record, so first to give a brief history of the Company. The United Ballet was formed to give a Gala Season of Ballet in His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, from 28th November to 7th December. The programme included *Dream Visions*, *Prismatic Variations*, *Les Patineurs*, and *Prince Igor*. For the purpose of this season the New Zealand Ballet Company and Auckland Ballet Theatre combined forces. Ballet masters and producers for the season were Poul Gnatt and Russell Kerr, with Philip Chatfield and Rowena Jackson producing *Les Patineurs* with choreography by Frederick Ashton (reproduced by permission of the Royal Ballet). Musical director and conductor for the season was Michael Corban.

Press Reviews: "It needed only the triumph this week of the United Ballet Company to prove the point to the hilt that New Zealand's artistic adolescence is over, for here we were given the youngest and most difficult of the arts in a manner which left no room for doubt that ballet had also arrived."

"Fine ballet, and all New Zealand-made. Ballet in the full sense of the art was born in New Zealand with the astonishingly successful issue of the marriage between the New Zealand Ballet Company and Auckland Ballet Theatre. Jackson was in tremendous form for *Les Patineurs*, the ballet which she and Chatfield produced and the only one in which they appeared."

"Applause and more applause, cheering and more cheering, clapping and stamping that fairly shook the building marked the ballet in His Majesty's Theatre last night."

In a curtain speech Rowena Jackson said that this was definitely the last appearance she and her husband Philip Chatfield would make as dancers, but they would be helping ballet in New Zealand by producing, or in an advisory capacity. Sir John Allun presented Miss Jackson with a silver plaque inscribed "Rowena for Merit in Ballet. New Zealand. December 7, 1959." Sir John described the plaque as New Zealand's first "Oscar."

BALLET IN NEW ZEALAND

RUSSELL KERR as the Warrior Chief in the United Ballet production of *Prince Igor*. Seen in our picture with Judith Alleman as the Persian Princess, the rôle she shared with Sara Neil.

Russell Kerr was born in New Zealand, and is well known to London audiences having danced with Sadler's Wells Ballet, Ballet Rambert, and Festival Ballet. He married June Greenhalgh in 1955, whilst they were both dancing with Festival Ballet, and they returned to New Zealand in 1957. June Kerr also took part in the United Ballet season. *Photo:* John Tudehope.

Sara Neil is also a New Zealander, having been born in Wellington, and with her husband Walter Trevor returned in 1959 to open a school in Wellington. Both started their careers with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

MAVIS AIREY and Ludwig Werner in *Romeo and Juliet* produced by the Kalnins Ballet Theatre at the Theatre Royal, Christchurch on 31st October. The programme for this three-performance season consisted of *Les Preludes*, *Pulcinella*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *La Boutique Fantasque*. *Photo:* Martin Baniball.

As Potiphar's Wife in Josephslegende, *Munich State Opera*, 1952 Photo: Sabine Toepffer

As Princess Turandot in Turandot, *Munich State Opera*, 1954 Photo: Rudolf Betz

CAREERS IN PICTURES

Irène Skorik

IRÈNE SKORIK was born in Paris of a Russian mother and a French father. Before she was a year old, the family moved to London, where her father was a foreign correspondent in a bank. By the time she was six years old she already spoke three languages, English, French and Russian, to which she added German later. After five years in England, the family returned to Paris where Irène began to study the piano besides attending school. So her great musical gift was developed at an early age. It was only some time later, after her mother had taken her to see a ballet at the Paris Opéra, that she discovered her interest in dancing. In spite of her husband's protests, Mme. Skorik accompanied her little daughter to the afternoon classes of Mme. Zambelli, one of the famous teachers of the Opéra school of ballet. However, when at the age of twelve Irene was to enter the Academy of Dancing at the Opéra, her father did not give his permission. He was firmly convinced that his daughter did not possess the necessary gifts to make ballet her career. Nevertheless, she continued to take classes, now with Mme. Préobrajenska, and by the time she was fourteen nothing, not even her father's scepticism, could keep her from becoming a dancer. For another two years she worked very hard, with Victor Gsovsky, and also continued to study the piano and composition. In her spare time she composed little pieces of music for the piano.

When in 1945 "Les Ballets de Champs Elysées" formed she immediately became one of its soloists, and at the opening performance was chosen to dance the Lilac Fairy to Ludmilla Tcherina's Aurora. She was at once noticed for her strong, effortless technique, fine musicality, and youthful assurance. Other roles followed in quick succession, *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, *Jeu de Cartes*, *Treizes Dances*, the pas de deux from *Nutcracker* and the second and third acts of *Swan Lake* and also Aurora, but her greatest successes were the title role in *La Fiancée du Diable* and above all Léda in *Les Amours de Jupiter*. At the age of eighteen she was one of the company's ballerinas, sharing many roles with Nina Vyroubova. Shortly before the company's first London season Vyroubova fell ill with appendicitis and Skorik had to take over all her roles at short notice. However, a few days later she, too, had to be rushed to hospital with poisoning; it was discovered later that two other people who had dined at the same hotel became ill and one of them died. Being the company's only ballerina, she had carried on for days until she was so ill that she only narrowly escaped falling off the stage into the orchestra pit.

When in 1948 Cyril W. Beaumont saw her dance *La Sylphide* he was so impressed by her performance that he went up on the stage to speak to the young ballerina and present her with a Taglioni medal, and Arnold L. Haskell said of her some years later: "Skorik has never allowed my attention to wander for an instant. She has often enchanted me, sometimes irritated me, never bored me—Skorik, merci."*

Irene Skorik remained with the company until its end in 1950, touring France, England, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon and South America. Then she worked for a short time with Roland Petit's company, taking over the role of Carmen from Zizi Jeanmaire and Moira Shearer, and danced at the Venice Festival.

In October, 1950 Victor Gsovsky invited her to become prima ballerina at the Munich State Opera. Her roles with this company included Odette in *Swan Lake*, Act II, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, *La Sylphide*, *Cinderella*, the Girl in *Chemin de Lumière*, and Potiphar's wife in *Josephslegende*.

When she left Munich in 1952 she at first did some TV performances in London, then appeared with the Strasbourg Opera Ballet at the Festival of Vichy, gave concert performances together with Vyroubova, Lifar, and Algaroff, and made guest appearances with Milorad Miskovitch. In 1954, she toured England as ballerina of George Kirsta's "Ballet Comique." Then she returned to Munich to dance *Princess Turandot* and *Cinderella*. In 1955, she created Irene Lidova's *La Dryade* together with Miskovitch, and toured Spain with Janine Charrat. This year was of great importance to her career since she then began to study with M. Brieux whenever she was in Paris, and she says today that it was under his influence that she developed into a mature artist.

This new artistic maturity revealed itself when in 1956 she danced Giselle at the Munich State Opera, the first ballerina to dance the role there since Lucille Grahn. Unfortunately she could do it only twice at that time, because she broke her arm while making a guest appearance in the Rhineland. She slipped during the Nocturne, but continued to dance; when it came to the grand pas de deux she whispered to her partner that he must manage to support her without touching her left arm.

* *Dancers and Critics*, ed. C. Swinson, London 1950, p. 48.

With Heino Hallhuber in Hamlet, *Munich State Opera*, 1951.
Photo: Rudolf Betz

Irène Skorik in Swan Lake Act II. Photo: Lipnitzki
(See Inge Zürner reporting from Munich)

Later in the year she joined Tatjana Gsovsky's "Berliner Ballett" and toured Germany, Belgium, and Holland. In 1957 she became a member of "Les Ballets des Etoiles de Paris de Milorad Miskovitch" and for two years toured the whole of Europe with this company, dancing various classical pas de deux as well as a number of neo-classical roles. At the same time she continued as guest artist with the Munich State Opera and the Strasbourg Opera Ballet, where she created the role of Ariane in *Bacchus and Ariane* and in 1959 scored a great success as Cinderella. During the summer of this year she also did a tour of South America with Miskovitch's company, and it was during this tour that the world première of her first choreography, a neo-classical pas de deux entitled *Boheme*, took place. She did it to one of her own pieces of music which she had composed many years ago, at the age of seventeen, and she also danced in it. For the past few months she again was a guest ballerina with the Strasbourg Opera Ballet and with the Nederland Ballet, as well as with the Munich State Opera, where she danced the full length *Swan Lake*.

In between all these various engagements she also found time for concert tours with some of her famous colleagues and for frequent TV appearances. She danced *Swan Lake* in London in 1952, and *Coppelia*, *La Dryade*, *Orphée*, etc., in Germany. At the beginning of this year she did a TV play, "The Stranger from Paris," which had dance scenes in it.

It is quite impossible to give a complete list of all the roles she has danced in her long career, which has taken her to many places where ballet had never been seen before. For the Munich State Opera and the Strasbourg Opera Ballet she has done very much the same thing that Markova did for the Vic-Wells Ballet many years ago. In her quiet way she set an example of steady hard work and artistic integrity to these young companies and by her own mature artistry and perfect technique helped them to win an ever-growing public.

"Do you have any hobbies ?" I ventured to ask even though I could hardly see how she could find the necessary spare time. "Oh, yes," she replied, "above all, music. I love to go to the opera and to concerts. My favourite composer is Richard Wagner. Then I like to visit art galleries or to read, especially Dostojevsky. I also have a large stamp collection. When I am on holiday, I like to be somewhere near a lake to swim, with lots of animals around me, cats, dogs and horses, and little goats, for they have such funny faces." "And what are your plans for the future ?" "To go on dancing. I have so many plans and commitments, that I won't be able to have a holiday this summer."

INGEBORG ZÜRNER

As the Girl in Chemin de Lumière, *Munich State Opera*, 1952
Photo: Sabine Toepffer

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